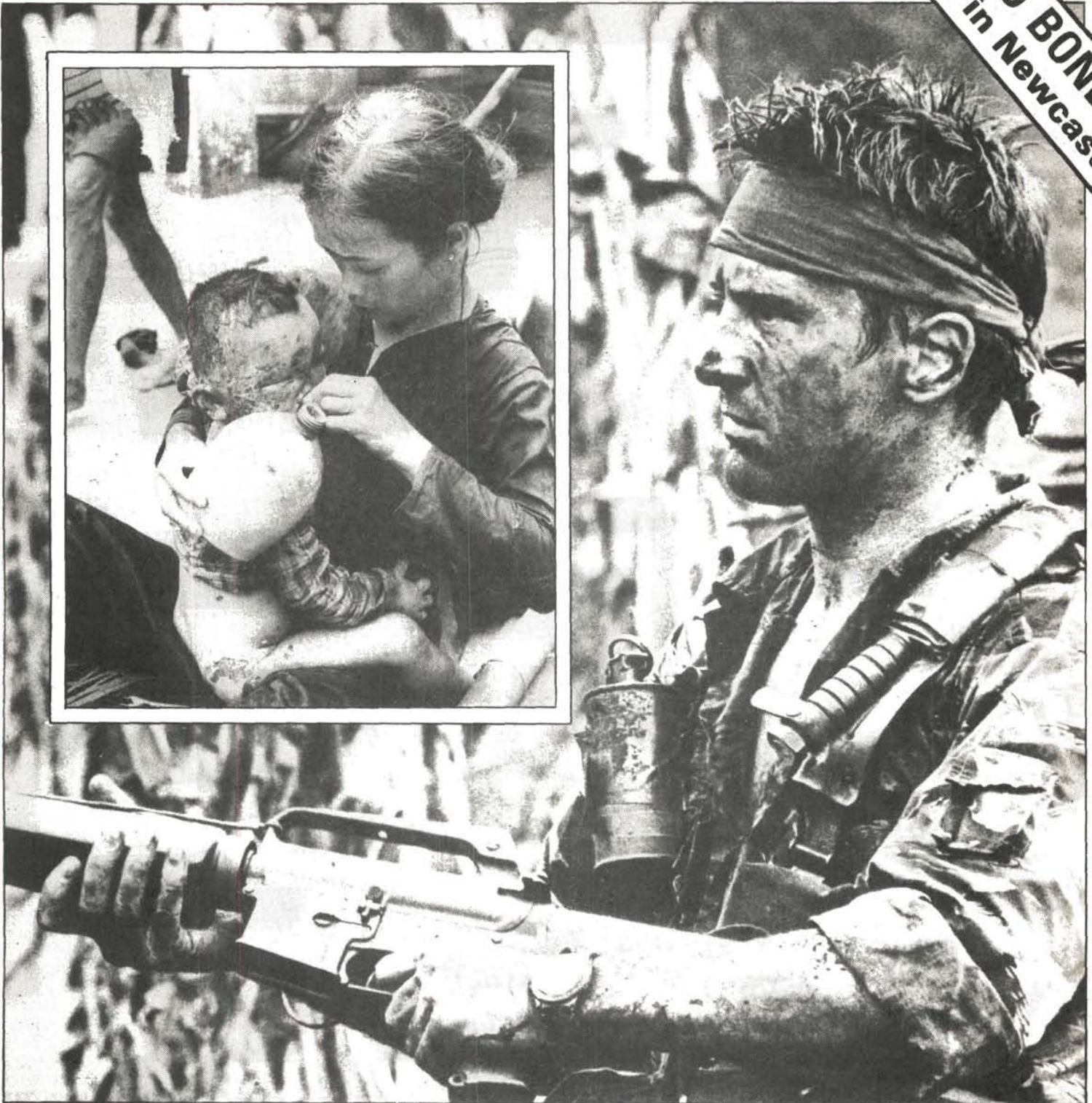


# NEW STATESMAN

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## Trouble on the buses

*Mick Hamer writes:* William Rodgers, the Secretary of State for Transport, is one of the Cabinet's keenest advocates of pay restraint; and following the lorry drivers' 22 per cent settlement he is determined to make their fellow TGWU members, the bus workers, settle within the government's guidelines. Naturally enough, the bus workers' case relies on comparing their wages and age increases with those of similar workers; so the TGWU points to the pay rates of bus workers on London Transport, who earn 70 per cent more than their provincial colleagues. Intriguingly, the government's new guidelines open up a 'comparability' loophole but specifically exclude transport workers from using this argument.

The bus workers' claim for a review of pay and consolidation of Phase One and Two increases into the basic rate produced an offer of 6 per cent from their employers, who were heavily leant on by their paymasters – the government. Rodgers also turned down the TGWU's request for an inquiry into the pay and conditions of bus workers. In a somewhat surprising speech to the Confederation of British Road Passenger Transport, which is a trade association and not involved in pay bargaining, Rodgers resorted to heavy-handed political threats: 'Excessive wage settlements could very quickly turn a bright future (for the bus industry) into no future at all.' Privately, operators say they would not be unhappy with an inquiry; indeed, recruiting labour is already a serious problem in some areas.

Faced with government intransigence, the bus workers are organising a one day strike in an attempt to force the government to give them an inquiry. Further industrial action may follow. But although the provincial bus workers' basic wage of only £35 a week puts them among the lower paid, they lack the political muscle of lorry drivers.

## How devolution was dropped

*Ron McKay writes:* Behind the composed public reaffirmation of devolution at last weekend's Scottish conference of the Labour Party lay some frantic manoeuvres designed to ease the government's attachment to what is fast being seen as its St Andrew's cross.

The Scottish executive, which met on the eve of the conference to hammer out an emergency statement for debate, was divided almost exactly in half between those who wanted a strong commitment to devolution and the Parliamentary wing, led by MPs Donald Dewar and George Robertson and supported by Scottish Secretary Bruce Millan, who argued that the issue was dead and should be filed with other unattainables in the party's election manifesto.

After a four-hour meeting and five divisions, the statement to be put to conference was still strong. In particular, it advocated government pressure against its own dissenters: 'While we recognise the Parliamentary difficulties, we urge the government to do all in its power to implement the Scotland Act and to urge all Labour MPs to support the government in its efforts.' However, on the morning of the first day of the conference, last Friday, executive members were roused by a telephone call from the party's Scottish secretary Helen Liddell, summoning them to a meeting in her hotel room to reconsider this clause. Ironically enough, the meeting was at the behest of Alex Kitson of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who was responsible for a recall Scottish conference of the party in 1974. At that time he was able to convince delegates, who had previously rejected devolution, that the survival of a Labour government, then faced with the seemingly inexorable rise of the Nationalists, depended on an Edinburgh Assembly and substantial autonomy.

Last week, while still concerned with the preservation of the government, he argued that devolution

was now politically disastrous. At the short meeting in the Station Hotel the executive again agreed with his line, and the offending clause was struck out – thus enabling the government to allow a free vote in the Commons without embarrassment. Alex Kitson was then able to attend his daughter's wedding in Edinburgh and miss the devolution debate, confident that the conference would not divide in public. And so it proved.

## Lock up your secrets

*James Michael writes:* Girding its loins for battle after the recent 'supergrass' leak to the *Guardian*, the government is now making a determined effort to stop Clement Freud's open government Bill. Two government reports intended to discredit the proposal will be published a few days before the Bill is next debated by the Commons on 6 April. To be on the safe side, the government also plans to starve the Bill of Parliamentary time rather than trying to kill it by an outright vote; the six hours now scheduled for the Bill will probably not be enough to debate all the amendments proposed by the government.

As it now stands, the Bill would make significant changes in British administration, although it is far less sweeping than the US or Swedish laws. It survived the committee stage largely intact after front-bench wrecking amendments were either rejected or voted down. Talks are now going on between the Bill's supporters and ministers about the amendments to be reintroduced by the government when the Bill returns to the House.

During the debate the government will be brandishing two new weapons. The first of these is a report based on quick trips to Stockholm and Washington by two civil servants just before Christmas. It will almost certainly say that open government laws are expensive and dangerous, and have only been adopted because Sweden and America do not have the British safeguard of ministerial responsibility. The second will be an 'alternative proposal', which will probably be little more

in 1,100 deaths by the end of 1978. In practice the army has used its powers selectively against the Left. The Istanbul Martial Law Administrator declared it a crime to possess a magazine or book published by the left-wing publishing house Urun. The left-wing youth organisation IGD, linked with the banned Communist Party, was disbanded.

Meanwhile the Right go from strength to strength. The openly fascist National Action Party and its terror commando units, the Grey Wolves, have been untouched by the martial law administrators. The leader of the NAP, Colonel Turkes, was deputy prime minister in the last coalition government and used his position to infiltrate supporters into the Turkish bureaucracy and police.

Now Turkes has sent his organisers into Britain. Their main stronghold is Leeds University, where they are run by a former president of *Ulku Ocaklari*, the NAP's youth wing in Turkey. So far this year there have been attacks on young Turkish workers and students in London, Birmingham and, most recently, Manchester. Last week Manchester magistrates gave bail to seven Turkish students who had been involved in a punch-up following a fascist attack on a group of left-wing Turks taking part in Manchester University's rag week.

To the obvious dismay of Manchester CID, who pleaded in court for the Turks to be left in Risley Remand Centre until the full committal hearing in June, the magistrate let them return to their studies with a warning about 'internal squabbles among Turkish students not spilling on to the streets'.

He is clearly an optimist. NAP members here are reported to have established links with British fascists from the League of St George and the National Front. As in Turkey, it may not be long before the NAP's political violence in Britain moves beyond beatings and intimidation. It would be reassuring to feel that the Home Office had the problem in mind and was prepared to deport adherents of Turkes' NAP in the same way that foreign visitors who preached the philosophy of the Ku Klux Klan or the Waffen SS were ordered out of Britain.

## Polisario celebrates

*Roger Hardy writes:* 'Polisario's communiqués left me rather sceptical, but everything I have seen today convinces me that their army is strong and well-organised and that they have a well-defined strategy.' These remarks by General Shazli, the man who led Egypt's army in the October War but publicly broke with Sadat last year, expressed the views of many who attended the recent third anniversary celebrations of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, set up in 1976 after Spain pulled out of the Spanish Sahara.

On display at the anniversary festivities (which I attended as one of three British delegates) was an impressive quantity of captured material – landrovers (supplied by Britain to Morocco), Mercedes trucks, tanks with French markings, US arms and ammunition. In the midst of it all stood a forlorn group of Moroccan prisoners. The most senior was a pilot, Captain Ali Najab, shot down last September while flying a reconnaissance mission over Smara. Trained in France and the USA, he speaks good English and says he is being well-treated. He now doubts whether Morocco can win the war.

Polisario's support, coming most immediately from Algeria and Libya, is steadily growing. The latest states to recognise the Saharan Republic are Tanzania, Ethiopia and Vietnam (the nineteenth to do so). Spain's ruling UCD party recognises Polisario, as do the Christian Democrats in Italy and Britain's Labour Party (but not the Labour government). Delegates to the anniversary came from SWAPO, the Patriotic Front, the PFLP, Angola, Fretilin, a group of Chilean exiles in Algiers; and there was the surprise appearance of Egypt's General Shazli. The Syrians maintain relations, but the Arab world generally backs King Hassan of Morocco. And while King Hassan plays host to the Shah, it is on the cards that the next person to recognise Polisario will be the Ayatollah Khomeini.



than a declaration of intent to be more open in future; as such, it will be very like the circular sent to Permanent Secretaries by Sir Douglas Allen in July 1977, shortly before he retired as head of the civil service.

## Wolves come to Britain

*Denis MacShane writes:* A distant reflection of the political crisis in Turkey can be seen this week by motorists using the various roads that connect Leeds to London: thirty Turkish students have been marching down the 200 mile route to draw attention to the continuing strength of the extreme right wing inside Turkey and, ominously, the export of fascist violence to the Turkish community in Britain.

In theory Bulent Ecevit's government introduced martial law in selected provinces in order to put an end to the right-wing terrorism which had resulted



## NOTES

### A bomb to kill blacks

**Roger Murray writes:** The UN Security Council is to be asked to take urgent measures to ban all forms of technical and scientific assistance for South Africa's nuclear programme. Nigeria's ambassador to the UN, Leslie O. Harriman, presided last month over a UN seminar on nuclear collaboration held in London, and pledged that he would raise the issue when Nigeria takes the chair at the Security Council in March. Representatives of African front-line states, liberation movements from Southern Africa and European anti-apartheid organisations presented the conference with evidence that South Africa's nuclear ambitions were military and strategic in character and posed a serious threat to world peace.

Mr Harriman criticised those countries – including Britain, France, West Germany and the United States – which had provided South Africa with nuclear equipment and expertise, and he claimed that South Africa's planned nuclear explosion in the Kalahari desert last year proved that no line could be drawn between collaboration for peaceful and for military use. Particular scrutiny was given to the alleged scientific exchanges between West Germany and South Africa over the enrichment 'jet nozzle' process, and Wolf Geissler of the West German anti-apartheid movement claimed to have evidence of supplies of sensitive nuclear equipment despite the formal denials recently published by the West German government.

South Africa's unsettled political situation made the possession of nuclear capability a particular threat to African states close to the conflict. The African National Congress presented a document which apparently proved that South Africa already had contingency plans for coping with the effects of nuclear explosions in its border regions. Published by the SA Atomic Energy Board in 1972, the document contained maps showing that a 10-kiloton device could be exploded in most border

areas without serious seismic damage. The ANC attached particular significance to maps showing the distribution of population in those areas on a racial basis which seemed to indicate that the white areas were the ones to be protected at all costs from the effects of nuclear explosions.

### Dublin débâcle for British Leyland

**Brian Trench writes from Dublin:** The mess that is British Leyland extends to Ireland. Last month, days before work was due to resume at their Dublin factories and depots following a five-month strike, the company announced that their Mini assembly contract with Reg Armstrong Motors Ltd would cease. As a result, 172 assembly workers face redundancy – so they and 300 others working in BL subsidiaries stayed out on the strike they began last September. On Monday of this week they staged a mass picket at BL's Dublin headquarters in protest against the sackings.

For 40 years, Morris, then Austin-Morris, then BLMC, then BL vehicles were assembled and distributed by Brittain Motors Ltd. This company collapsed four years ago in a clatter of unresolved arguments with Leyland about money owing in both directions. At its peak, Brittain had employed one thousand. Leyland products used to take up one quarter of the Irish vehicle market. Their share is now down to one twentieth.

BL met some part of their legally determined obligations to the ex-Brittain workers by taking on 150 in a new car seat frame plant in Dublin, which was set up with the aid of £333,000 in state grants as well as assistance from the European social fund. This was to have become one of the top two seat frames suppliers to the group, but it has never reached full capacity and BL, claiming heavy losses,

now wants to cut it back.

Assembly of BL's biggest seller in Ireland, the Mini, was negotiated with former Isle of Man TT winner, Reg Armstrong, for a period of three years. Armstrong had weathered a long and bitter occupation of his car assembly works when he stopped production of the Opel range, and still holds the Opel dealers agency as well as that for Honda motorbikes.

Up to eight months ago, BL could not sell their newest *marques* in the Irish Republic. A union ban on the importation of Allegro/Marina models, which BL refused to have assembled in Ireland, was only lifted then in return for a £6 a week wage increase paid to almost 300 BL and Armstrong employees. The parity claim by workers in the car seat frame factory, who were excluded from the wage rise, led to the strike launched on 18 September.

The company insisted that the unions agree to redundancies in the seat frame plant as part of any settlement – and that prolonged the strike. Only when the offending clause was withdrawn and the company came up with a £4 increase did the strikers vote to go back to work.

It was then that their assembly colleagues learned – most of them through the press – that talks between BL and Armstrong on the contract which ran out in November had broken down over financial details. Leyland announced that they would not restart assembly before all restrictions on the importation of fully built-up cars were removed, and their falling out with Reg Armstrong was complete.

Armstrong himself is said to be interested in a deal with Honda to handle their cars, which rival the Mini directly. Just who, if anybody, takes any responsibility for the 172 assembly workers remains a matter of continuing dispute. The unions plan to lay it at Leyland's door by seeking the support of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions for a total import ban on BL products.

## There is strong evidence that Shell is still supplying Rhodesia with oil **Now What, Dr Owen?**

SHELL HAS NOT yet severed its Rhodesian connection. The Anglo-Dutch company is believed to be selling around 25,000 barrels a day of crude oil to Sasol, the South African state oil corporation. This is subsequently refined, and part of the output exported to Rhodesia. Shell's role in supplying crude oil to Sasol appears to contradict assurances given to the Foreign Office that it has now ended all links with Rhodesia.

The crude oil supplied by Shell comes from the Seria oilfield in Brunei, a small British-protected state on the north coast of Borneo. It is sold by Shell International Petroleum, a company registered in the UK, and shipped to Durban. There it is piped to the South African Government-controlled National Refinery (Natref) near Johannesburg, which, the Bingham Report confirmed, has since 1977 supplied most of Rhodesia's oil requirements, a quarter of the refinery's output. Natref's main source of crude oil used to be Iran. But, since the last shipment of Iranian oil arrived in January, the South Africans have been scouring the world market for new supplies. Shell, however, is understood to have refused a request to increase its shipments from Brunei to make up for the shortfall from Iran. The company is only too aware that the whole question of supplies to South Africa is of the utmost political sensitivity.

In October 1977 Shell received an assurance from Sasol, the main shareholder in the Natref refinery, that 'no products produced from the crude oil which you will be supplying to us under this contract will be exported to Rhodesia'. This assurance is puzzling as last year the Shah's Foreign Minister claimed that he also had obtained a written assurance from Pretoria that 'no drop' of Iranian oil was being delivered to Rhodesia. The Shell and Iranian assurances, it would seem, cannot both be correct. Two explanations have been suggested. First, Sasol also operates a small oil-from-coal plant. But this produces 4,500 barrels a day, which is only a quarter of Rhodesia's requirements. Secondly, Sasol might be refining oil from South Africa's large strategic stockpile. But again this seems very

unlikely because of the enormous logistic problems involved in pumping up stocks from the disused coal mines where the oil is stored.

If one has to choose between the two South African assurances, then there are some grounds for believing that given to Iran. It was, after all, provided on a higher government-to-government level, rather than the company-to-company assurance received by Shell. Sasol's letter to Shell merely states that no oil is 'exported to Rhodesia', which still leaves open the possibility that Sasol is making sales to a South African intermediary company (such as Freight Services) which in turn is supplying Rhodesia. Shell's press office refuses to reveal whether any attempt has been made to seek independent confirmation of the Sasol assurance. In practice, however, it is not really possible to separate different shipments of crude oil and then to say that a particular barrel of refined oil originated from a certain consignment of crude oil. Some of the Brunei oil supplied by Shell must therefore end up in Rhodesia after refining.

Calculations derived from oil company statistics suggest that Shell may now be supplying over a third of Natref's requirements. Official figures for 1974, the most recent available, show that the National Iranian Oil Corporation sold 38,000 barrels a day (b/d) to Natref. Since, according to the Bingham Report, the remainder of Natref's requirements were provided by Shell, and the refinery uses about 65,000 b/d, this suggests that Shell shipments from Brunei amounted to around 27,000 b/d. Brunei's trade figures for 1976 show exports to South Africa of 24,000 b/d. Shell refuses to reveal the quantities of oil supplied to South Africa, on grounds of commercial secrecy. In reply to the specific allegation that Brunei oil is reaching Rhodesia after refining, the company has merely reiterated the statement it made on the day that the Bingham Report was published last September: 'no Shell subsidiary supplies oil to Rhodesia or has any arrangements which are calculated to promote the supply of oil to Rhodesia.' In the past, however, assurances from the oil companies over Rhodesia have

proved notoriously unreliable.

The possibility that Shell oil is still reaching Rhodesia is likely to prove embarrassing to the Foreign Office. Last November, after it had been revealed that Shell and BP had been involved in a swap arrangement with Sasol to supply Rhodesia, Dr. Owen took a tough stand on sanctions. He told Parliament that he had 'placed Shell and BP formally on notice of of the Government's strongly held view that no company in the Shell or BP group should be involved in the supply of oil to Rhodesia, whether direct, indirect or by participation in marketing arrangements related to the supply of oil by others to Rhodesia'. Sales of oil to Sasol, the source of most of Rhodesia's oil, appear incompatible with Dr. Owen's instructions.



Electrically operated pumps just outside Seria where Brunei's oilfields begin.

The political crisis in Asia hinges on Cambodia

## **Eliminating the Pol Pot Regime**

THE BRIDGE at Aranyaprathet is Cambodia's little used link to the world. It carries a narrow road over a small creek which here forms the border between Cambodia and Thailand. After the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh in April 1975, foreigners caught in the next three and a half years' war made their escape here. Also tentative contacts between Thai and Khmer Rouge officials were made here. One could stand on the bridge and watch young Khmer Rouge soldiers guarding the other side of the river. In January this year, hundreds more foreigners - mostly third world diplomats and Chinese technicians - crossed the bridge after the Vietnamese invasion forced them to flee Cambodia. Now there are no Khmer Rouge soldiers to be seen on the other side.

Two Sundays ago, fighting between the

Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese Army reached the bridge. A group of Vietnamese crossed into Thailand, killed one soldier and wounded several others, then retreated. The action caused a spasm on the Thai side. Four tanks and several companies of men were sent along the creek and a spotter plane broadcast a warning to the invaders that they were in Thailand not Cambodia. The incident was short but for the Thais it was not reassuring.

With most press attention fixed upon the fighting between China and Vietnam, the situation in Cambodia is - just as between 1970-75 - being treated as peripheral to the main attraction. But the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia was the catalyst for China's invasion of Vietnam and the outcome there is critical to that of the Northern war. Thailand is a poor place in which to gather information

about China and Vietnam. But a little more can be learned about events in at least the western sector of Cambodia; the partial account which follows is derived from talks with diplomats, Thai officials, refugee workers, missionaries, and refugees themselves.

IT WAS CLEAR as early as last summer that the Vietnamese were determined to remove the Khmer Rouge regime (the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique), although the Khmer Rouge do not seem to have anticipated the speed with which the Vietnamese would roll through the Eastern provinces and capture Phnom Penh, they had prepared well for an invasion. For months the 'clique' had shifted supplies to the jungle and mountain hideouts whence they emerged in April 1975. When the Vietnamese arrived in Phnom Penh the city was stripped

of all supplies. The invaders found they needed to import food not only for themselves but also for whatever proportion of the Cambodian population they controlled.

In their haste to capture Phnom Penh the Vietnamese inevitably bypassed Khmer Rouge positions. At once their lines of communication came under heavy attack. Such attacks, it appears, have continued. No one knows how many Khmer Rouge troops there are now. Estimates in Bangkok vary between 15,000 and 60,000, but about 15 divisions of Vietnamese troops – 150,000 men – have been tied down in Cambodia since January. It is an enormous drain upon Vietnam's armed strength and its weak economy.

Just how well the Khmer Rouge are still doing is a matter of dispute. Diplomats in Hong Kong and Bangkok claim their guerilla tactics have been very successful. And that in some places they are also able to use both armour and heavy artillery. They are said to have mounted frequent raids on Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport, capturing supplies. But some of their successes may be exaggerated here. The Thais do not wish to see the Vietnamese established on their eastern border and some American officials take a degree of pleasure in the notion that the Vietnamese are, finally, 'hurting real bad'. At Aranyaprathet the stories which the refugees tell, are not so simple.

In recent days, several large groups of refugees have crossed into Thailand. About 1,500 in all. They are almost all very poor peasants from villages in the Sisophon area. Some of them did not at first know of the Vietnamese invasion. They had simply known that Khmer Rouge controls on them were suddenly diminished and they took this opportunity to run into the jungle. Those who did encounter Vietnamese troops have similar stories to tell.

When the Vietnamese, together with their few Khmer collaborators, the forces of Heng Samrin, have approached a village, the Khmer Rouge have usually left without a fight. The Vietnamese enter and seem to behave well. They distribute rice and cooking utensils so that people can eat *en famille* instead of *en masse*, and either appoint or supervise the election of new village officials. These changes appear to have been widely welcomed, even though they are imposed by the Khmers' traditional enemy.

But the Vietnamese do not appear to have the strength to stay. They almost always move on from the villages they have occupied, sometimes leaving a radio for emergency calls. Then the Khmer Rouge come back, discover from spies they left behind what has happened, kill those who collaborated, take away the food and force the people to march into the jungle where the Vietnamese cannot reach them. One missionary who works here conjures up the frightful image of literally hundreds of thousands of people trapped in the jungle without food, water or medicine. Another refugee worker reckons that there are now probably about 30,000 in this plight along the border with Thailand.

SOME PEASANTS SAY that in the jungle they were made to plant rice or clear trails. Others say they were ordered to do nothing. Many found there were fewer Khmer Rouge than ever guarding them, and that Khmer Rouge fear of them had, as a result, increased. They say the Khmer Rouge soldiers kept their

distance, especially at night, hence the relative ease with which large groups are now able to flee towards Thailand.

But escaping the Khmer Rouge is only the first problem. If they are lucky the refugees meet with little groups of right wing Khmer Serei (Free Khmer) guerrillas who are based along the border and help refugees through the minefields laid by both the Khmer Rouge and Thai armed forces. Refugee officials insist that in most areas Thai troops have orders either to send Cambodians back (in which case the Khmer Rouge will kill them if they can) or to kill them themselves. In the last two months almost 3,000 refugees have actually made it to Thailand. Refugee officials claim that perhaps as many as hundreds have died at Thai hands. Those who have been allowed across have invariably been stripped by Thai troops of any gold or other valuables they may have managed to keep secret from the Khmer Rouge.

Thai officials sometimes now claim that the new refugees are all Khmer Rouge or their families: they are being detained in a special new camp at Trat, in southeast Thailand, to which all foreigners are denied access. But this is already full and about 1,200 are in a temporary camp at Aranyaprathet (15,000 earlier refugees are in a permanent camp here) where they are lucky to be under the control of a humane and well intentioned district officer, Amorn Anantachai.

Recently, I spoke to some of these new refugees; they were almost all women or children who had lived their lives without moving from their village. Their men, they said, either had already tried to escape (they rarely knew if they had succeeded), or had been led away by the Khmer Rouge after some transgression, never to be seen again.

It is hard when talking to these refugees, especially through an interpreter, to envisage the lives they have had to lead in recent years. None of those to whom I spoke related massacre stories, but one girl said all her men had disappeared because they had been Lon Nol soldiers. They spoke of starvation, of unremitting labour and above all of the total disappearance of all those who seemed to offend the Khmer Rouge.

Almost all were suffering at least from anaemia and worms, and some of the children seemed sicker. But they spoke of their lives without obvious rancour. Some of them even told jokes when they recounted their stories. The impression of Cambodia today is nonetheless horrifying.

The Vietnamese have not yet allowed western journalists into Cambodia: it is still not secure enough. But East European journalists have been there and have returned with stories which, even in the light of all that is known about Khmer Rouge excesses, seem incredible. A Polish journalist, Wieslaw Gornicki, told Alan Dawson of UPI in Hanoi recently that the Vietnamese took him to the town of Prey Veng and told him that almost all the 20,000 inhabitants had been massacred, and their bodies thrown into the sewers.

'Have you ever heard of liquid bodies?' Gornicki asked. 'What we saw were the remains, which were just liquified flesh with millions of maggots and worms'. Dawson noted that the Poles, as allies of the Vietnamese, had reason to exaggerate the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. He had the impression, however, that Gornicki and other East Europeans

were not dissembling at all but were truly horrified.

Many Western countries, including the United States, have called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Indochinese countries. Hanoi has rejected such linkage, insisting that the Chinese invasion cannot be linked to 'the Cambodian question'.

The Vietnamese argue they have tried to rid the world of one of the most barbarous regimes of recent times. And although their invasion was intended to establish an Indochina Federation dominated by Hanoi, their claim has merit. For strategic reasons it has been rejected in the West: a buffer for Thailand is needed and the Khmer Rouge had provided it. Here in Aranyaprathet such reasons seem inadequate.

THE REFUGEES are not clear what they hope for in Cambodia now. Some say they would return if Sihanouk was in power again: others say the Prince is discredited by his alliance with the Khmer Rouge. It is clear, however, that they now regard the Khmer Rouge as a greater danger than the Vietnamese. It is to join the Heng Samrin forces, not the Khmer Rouge, that some groups of men have returned to Cambodia.

For almost four years now the Khmer Rouge have demonstrated their hatred for the Cambodian people and have caused, at the very least, several hundred thousand gruesome deaths.

One western doctor who worked in Phnom Penh before April 1975, at first welcomed the Khmer Rouge victory and has since been helping refugees points out that in the last four years Khmer Rouge cadres have become both younger and more violent. Pol Pot is trying to create a society with no past, in which no alternatives are possible. He has not yet succeeded completely: the implications of complete success are frightful.

At its best the Chinese invasion of Vietnam might help encourage the Vietnamese to agree to some compromise over Cambodia; say the return of Sihanouk. (How successful the Prince could be right now in controlling the Khmer Rouge is very questionable. Heng Samrin probably has a better chance.) Alternatively the invasion might, as China hopes, force the Vietnamese to withdraw troops from Cambodia. The Thai Prime Minister General Chamanand goes to Moscow next week to persuade the Russians to force the Vietnamese from Cambodia. If successful this will inevitably strengthen Pol Pot's position.

Is it therefore clear that the U.S. and other nations are right to call for Vietnamese withdrawal? Last year Jimmy Carter called the Khmer Rouge the world's worst violators of human rights: can it really be consistent to argue now that they be allowed to run Cambodia again?

In Aranyaprathet it does not seem so clear at all. Here, indeed, many Cambodians and those who work with them seem to believe that, however distasteful the notion, Vietnamese imperialism might help the people in the short term. And in the long run they argue that it is unlikely that a Cambodian puppet, Heng Samrin or any other, will always dance to Vietnam's tune. Once the Khmer Rouge are eliminated as a military force the fabric of Cambodia can perhaps be remade. Until and unless that band of fanatics disappears, the country will remain, in Radio Hanoi's words, 'a land of blood and tears'.

## The folly of the strong pound

The foreign exchange market, at least, likes the Callaghan government: this week the pound reached its highest level against other European currencies for over a year. Since the end of 1978 the pound has risen by 2.5 per cent on average and has even managed a rise compared with the usually strong German mark. Mr Callaghan himself is pleased with this achievement: many see a strong pound as a symbol of success. However, it is better thought of as a cause of failure; failure to bring down unemployment and failure to prevent a slowdown in economic growth. If the pound holds steady (or worse, floats up) against the currencies of countries with lower inflation rates then British industry has to fight harder to hold on to its markets at home and overseas. When it does not succeed British workers lose their jobs.

Over the last six to nine months British goods have become relatively more expensive than foreign ones but deterioration in British competitiveness is not yet fully reflected in official figures. These only cover the second quarter of 1978 – a time when the pound had just fallen against most other currencies – but suggest that British manufactured goods had lost much of the competitive advantage gained when the pound fell dramatically in the crisis of 1976. Increased wages and the strength of the pound since the middle of last year have ensured that now all the advantages of the 1976 trauma have disappeared.

The government's commitment to a stable pound is hard to defend. Mr Healey believes that inflation is the main economic problem and devaluation would wreck whatever remains of the government's counter inflationary policy. When pressed, he goes further and says that devaluation does little or nothing to boost employment and output anyway as all the competitive gains of the cheaper pound are inevitably wiped out by higher wage demands – a response to higher import prices. The international monetarists

go further and say that a strong pound can set off a virtuous circle of lower import prices, lower wage demands, lower domestically generated inflation and thus improved competitiveness, output and employment at a lower rate of inflation. Unfortunately there is little evidence of this in Britain: the stability of the pound has done nothing to moderate wage demands or settlements. The extravagant claims made in 1977 and 1978 for a high exchange rate now look just like the old idea that depressing the economy is the way to cure inflation: the over-valued exchange rate pushes up unemployment and reduces wage demands that way.

On the other hand it does look as though a fall in the pound could compensate for some of the effects which Britain's high rate of inflation has on international competitiveness and trade. The Treasury model of the economy suggests that it takes as long as five years to wipe out the effect of devaluation on employment and output. The National Institute shows a lasting small gain to competitiveness from a fall in the exchange rate. When the pound was low in 1977 British exports rose strongly, despite sluggish growth in world trade. Last year growth in exports was much less strong and exporters are again complaining that their prices are making it hard to sell overseas. Even the government's own – secret – forecasts assume that a stable pound only buys a lower level of inflation at a high cost in reduced output and increased unemployment: The Treasury paper on the European Monetary System – leaked by Brian Sedgemore last autumn – said that output would be cut by between 5 and 10 per cent by the end of 1982 if Britain joined EMS. Ironically, although the government decided against joining EMS – which would link the pound formally with the German mark – it has allowed the foreign exchange markets to do just that. This suggests that it might be very difficult for the government to pursue a different exchange

rate policy, even if it wanted to.

One of the major reasons for the pound's strength is the current account balance of payments surplus. This is thanks to North Sea oil and will continue for some time though Britain's export of non-oil products are not increasing as fast as our imports. However, it would surely be a better policy to use the benefits of North Sea oil to maintain a higher level of output, and therefore employment, than to use them to bolster up the exchange rate while the economy continues to slow down.

The second reason the pound is high is the government's slavish commitment to strict targets for the growth in the money supply and to ceilings on its borrowing. This policy has ensured that Britain has high interest rates, which are attractive to foreign investors. It has also restricted government spending and limited the scope for any tax cuts. Such a policy gives a tremendous boost to confidence in the almost exclusively monetarist financial markets.

Manoeuvring any exchange rate downwards is a risky business, especially when a fall is long overdue, as Britain discovered in 1976 and, to some extent, the Americans found out last year. So Treasury officials are reluctant to try the same trick again. But, they have learnt the wrong lessons from 1976. The mistake then was to wait until Britain's faster inflation rate had eaten away so dramatically at competitiveness that when the adjustment came, it had to be big: it was the size of this adjustment which undermined the pound and pushed it down further. The same mistake is being repeated today.

James Callaghan, of course, has good cause to shy away from the thought of devaluation. It was his failure to realise that the pound was over-valued which wrecked his Chancellorship in Wilson's first Cabinet and drove the economy onto the rocks. Last time was too little too late. This time ...

### LAW

## Co-opting council tenants

*Andrew Arden writes:* The government plans shortly to publish its new Housing Bill, which will include a 'tenants' charter', giving security of tenure to local authority and housing association tenants. If Labour is unlucky in the election, it is likely that a similar law will be passed by a Conservative administration – and that speaks volumes of just how unadventurous the legislation is.

Since August 1977, the Department of the Environment has issued two sets of consultation papers on the Bill. Both have dealt with something called, variously, 'Tenant Participation' and 'Tenant Involvement in Management'. Now, with a sense of linguistic propriety, the Department has opted exclusively for the latter description. But even this may be an overstatement.

What is suggested is that each local authority should have a Tenants' Committee, to be consulted by the authority on proposed major changes in management policy and practice. So far so good. But who will be responsible for establishing the Committee and maintaining its membership? The local authority. And who will decide

how to select the Committee, which is to be composed of between 15 and 25 'representative people'? The local authority. The authority may even appoint its own councillors if it so wishes.

In case that is not enough, it is left to the authority to draw up the Committee's constitution and rules. At least two public meetings a year are likely to be required by law, but this implies, of course, that the Committee can also meet in private. The local authority will, in practice, dictate what is discussed. For while the Committee is bound to consider matters on which the authority consults it, there is no corresponding obligation on the authority to pay attention to any other matter raised by the Committee.

The idea of all this is to give tenants more say in the management of their own homes. In fact, several schemes which are designed to achieve that purpose are already in operation. Basildon Council has been contemplating actually co-opting tenants on to its subcommittees, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972. Brent Council has also engaged in imaginative use of these powers, allowing the tenants' federation to send to each subcommittee meeting the person who raises, or is most closely affected by, a particular problem. Reg Fresson, in a parliamentary answer, has said that Brent provides a model

he would like other authorities to follow.

The danger with exercises of this nature is that, unless they are properly organised, public participation quickly becomes public relations, and is sensed to be so by those affected. Invited to drain their energies off into the statutory framework, their ideas and feelings are ignored, often for reasons not explained. Disillusionment and alienation set in and planners go home at night wondering why no one loves them. Alternatively, tenants see the scheme as a device by the authority to evade its management responsibilities by offloading them on to a Committee which can then take the blame for inactivity.

The present proposals do not even require authorities to give reasons for rejecting the views of the Tenants' Committee. Taken together with the other elements of this scheme, no one will be surprised if tenants quickly lose interest. In turn, the opponents of participation will be able to point to the programme as proof of tenant apathy or indifference to their environment.

Far from being a step towards giving tenants a sense of involvement, and a stake in their estates, the exercise may increase frustration and put a greater distance than ever between council tenants and those appointed to administer their homes.

## SHIPPING Harald Offordal

Norway's biggest shipping magnate charged with tax evasion

# The missing £70 million

AFTER NEARLY three years of investigation the authorities in Oslo have decided to prosecute Norwegian shipowner Hilmar Reksten on charges involving a massive 600 million *kroner*, or about £60 millions, in tax evasion. The charges also include breaches of Norwegian currency regulations. The course of the trial – already termed 'the swindle of the century' – will be watched with interest in London by Hambros Bank, the shipowner's main banking connection through several decades.

The charges date back to the golden days of international shipping in the beginning of the 1970s. In 1971 Reksten chartered out a number of supertankers in a deal with BP, which netted him a cool £44 million profit. Two years later, in 1973, he made a further deal with BP. The exact profit he made on this deal is not known, but the Norwegian authorities suspect, and eventually hope to prove in court, that it amounted to a further tens of millions of pounds. This will not be easy to prove, as not a single penny of the money has ever reached Norway – hence the charges. Instead, the profit has gone into a number of mysterious companies in tax havens like Panama, Liberia and Bermuda.

Reksten claims to have seen very little of this profit on the 1971 deal. Before the deal was made, he says, he had unfortunately chartered his ships away to a company called

Cornwall in Panama. Thus it was the Panama company which made the profit not Reksten. In the 1973 deal the story is very much the same; he had chartered his ships away to another Panama company called Intercontinental Chartering and Shipping. Reksten does not seem to know who owns and controls these two companies, which in the best tax haven tradition only have local Panama lawyers as board directors. However, if the authorities' assumption is correct and the companies are owned by Reksten himself – where, then, did the money go from Panama?

In 1973 the Bermuda-based shipping company Anglo Nordic was bought up by the British P & O company and a Liberian company called Palmerston on a 50/50 basis. Palmerston is owned by a Panamanian company, Cornhill Panama. The price paid was reported to be around £140 millions, of which Palmerston forked out half, i.e. £70 millions; very close to the amount of money which the Norwegian authorities believe Reksten made on his deals with BP at almost the same time. At the time it was widely reported, both in the British and Norwegian financial press, that Reksten was the man behind Palmerston, and, indeed, Reksten in a speech given in Oslo on October 9, 1973 was understood by his audience to confirm it himself. Other sources, including Norwegian-born American shipowner Erling D. Naess, who owned Anglo

Nordic before it was bought by Palmerston and P & O, also confirm it. Today, however, Reksten flatly denies that he has ever owned as much as one single share in Palmerston. His 1973 speech, he claims, was 'misunderstood' (though at the time he appears to have done nothing to correct this 'misunderstanding'). The urge suddenly to correct it in fact first appeared much later, when the effects of the 1974 oil crisis hit him. Having secured no long-term charters his supertankers were laid up one by one, and Reksten had to beg the Norwegian government for help.

Lobbied not least by Hambros Bank, the Norwegian government has to date guaranteed Reksten's debts to the tune of £70 millions. But the authorities also decided to take a long, hard look at his interest abroad if he had money salted away in other countries. Judging by the official charges now being brought the answer to their question has been yes.

When at last decision to prosecute him was made public, Reksten, who had so far kept his mouth firmly shut about the investigation, finally broke his silence, thundering that the last three years had been 'pure torture' and that he had never expected to receive such treatment 'in a society governed by law'. That law brings the 81 year old Norwegian shipowner to court some time in the autumn this year.

## LABOUR Anna Coote

Women demand nine seats on the TUC General Council

# Calling for positive action

A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT in policy took place at the TUC Women's Conference at Folkestone last week, when delegates voted for a programme of positive discrimination to increase the level of women's activity in trade unions.

There are now nearly three and a half million women in TUC-affiliated unions, making 28.7 per cent of the total. Yet when it comes to making decisions they are absurdly under-represented. At last year's Congress, the ratio of female delegates to female members was 1:38,800, compared with a male ratio of 1:7,800.

Until recently, efforts to get women fairly represented have been hampered by a belief that if they are to become equal they must be treated as such from the start and should therefore not be allowed any 'privileges' such as special conferences or reserved seats on committees. Last week, however, the female activists in the union movement recognised that this approach would never get them anywhere.

The Conference endorsed a nine-point charter which advises unions with large female membership and no women on decision-making bodies 'to ensure that women's views are represented, either through the creation of additional seats or by co-option'. It suggests that each union should set up special women's committees at national and local level.

There was overwhelming support for a resolution calling for seven additional seats for women on the General Council (making a total of nine) and for doubling the number of

elected members of the Women's Advisory Committee. In effect this last measure would mean doubling the Committee's strength. At present, ten out of 18 seats are filled by appointees of the General Council who are almost invariably male and who often cannot find time to attend meetings. The elected members, on the other hand, are chosen each year at the Women's Conference: they are almost invariably female, with a natural enthusiasm for the work in hand.

As predicted in last week's NEW STATESMAN, the Conference committed itself to 'affirmative action' at the workplace as well as within trade unions, and passed almost unanimously a resolution calling for 'positive discrimination in appropriate areas of education, training and employment'.

No-one was in any doubt that discrimination against women began at home, with the unequal division of housework and child care responsibilities. Pat Turner of the General and Municipal Workers' Union pointed out the dangers of the new-found commitment of both major parties to a 'family policy': at last year's Labour conference, she said, James Callaghan had spoken of the need to 'strengthen support for women as the centre of the family': it was not just chance that this coincided with a level of unemployment unprecedented since the war.

The Conference called for six weeks to be added to the statutory period of paid maternity leave and for 'the extra entitlement to be taken either by the mother or by the father as they determine'. Delegates felt it was more

important to establish the principle of shared responsibility than to engage in the narrower fight for more weeks of paid leave – and this represented another important shift in policy. As several speakers pointed out, it was the traditional assumption that women should take sole charge of their children that had locked them into patterns of part-time or intermittent – and low-paid – employment.

New life was breathed into the seemingly hopeless debate about the threat to jobs posed by microprocessors. Women's employment was thought to be more immediately at risk than men's, since the jobs in which they are concentrated (such as clerical work and retailing) are most easily automated. But the delegates' approach to solving the problem was not likely to have emerged in the normal run of union conferences: they called for a shorter working week for all employees and 'a campaign among male trade unionists to use the extra time available to spread the burden of housework and child care'.

Decisions reached by the TUC Women's Conference have become so much more radical in the last few years that it can no longer be dismissed as irrelevant or 'diversionary'. But the more energetic its policies become, the more noticeable it is that they are almost systematically ignored by the TUC Congress and General Council. The only way the decisions of the Women's Conference can become official TUC policy is for them to be passed as resolutions at Congress. Yet unions are reluctant to 'waste' their precious quota of resolutions on women's issues.

# Why the Deer Hunter is a lie

JOHN PILGER on the movie that's going to make its backers rich.

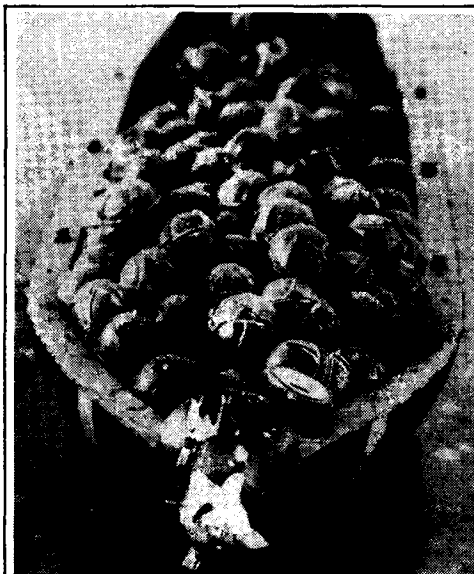
ELEVEN YEARS AGO I went to the movies in Montgomery, Alabama. It was a Saturday night and the local fleapalace was packed, mostly with 'good ole boys' who, in those days, hung about gas stations and giggled menacingly at the occupants of any car with out-of-Dixie plates. This was the summer of 1968; children had died in the firebombing of a black church in Montgomery, Richard Nixon was making his comeback and the American war in Vietnam was at its peak. The movie was *The Green Berets*, starring John Wayne.

From scene one they cheered. They threw their beer cans and yelped and when 'The Duke' dealt single-handedly with an entire regiment of gooks, a Buddha shape in front of me, hoarse with adulation, stood and saluted.

Like a fool, I laughed through it all, and therefore found myself having to exit well before the credits, and smartly. It didn't matter that I knew Vietnam and the war; this was such a *bad* movie — badly put together, badly acted — and so unwittingly silly that it was funny. And although it was hailed in towns like Montgomery, where John Wayne is part of the weaning process, it was generally dismissed as crude Hollywood stuff, whose antics by no stretch of the imagination tallied with the nightly television images of napalmed civilians and the greatest military machine in history going nowhere.

The other night I saw *The Deer Hunter*, which, as almost everybody must know by now, is about Vietnam, plus nice pictures of small-town America, a wedding and mountains. This film has been nominated for so many awards that only the Congressional Medal of Honour appears to be missing and the bestowal of that appropriate gong might well be a possibility if the relentless eulogising continues, here and in America. So finely orchestrated has been the pre-publicity for this film that 'Have you seen *The Deer Hunter*?' has become a breathless catch cry of one-upmanship. Indeed, it is difficult to get seats for a film which Derek Malcolm in *The Guardian* insists we should see 'at all costs', and which the *Daily Mail* describes as 'the story they never dared to tell before . . . the film that could purge a nation's guilt!' and which left Milton Shulman 'quivering and shattered' and which, according to Alexander Walker in the *Evening Standard*, 'says things that needed saying'. And so on, and so on. Lady Delfont, wife of one of the backers, apparently wept openly.

There is much to weep about. The backers and makers of this film are reported to have spent fourteen million dollars on sifting the ashes of one of history's most documented atrocities — in order to re-package it and re-sell it as a Hollywood 'smash' that will, and probably already has, made them fortunes; to reincarnate the triumphant Batman-jawed Caucasian warrior and to present a suffering, courageous people as sub-human Oriental brutes and dolts; to convert truth into lie. And, as I say, if the queues and touts at the box office are any indication, they are getting away with it.



**Canister Bomb Unit.** One fighter bomber carries four canister bomb units which scatter over 600,000 pellets capable of killing or wounding every living creature within an area of one square kilometre.

Compared with *The Deer Hunter*, *The Green Berets* was an honest film; its B-movie fantasy was discernible to all but the most evangelical 'patriot'. *The Deer Hunter* is technically slick, and perhaps its documentary and *verité* effects are even brilliant; *something* must have prompted usually discriminating critics to opt for unction and naïvete.

And, I suppose, for those who have forgotten what Vietnam was really about, or would wish to forget, or are too young to remember, or are truly naive, the slickness is persuasive; the wedding guests act like wedding guests, the blood gushes, the bullets thud and the rotors of helicopters make the sound that is forever embedded in my brain, from years of attending the reality. Otherwise, the symbolism is leaden (one shot for the proud stag etc.), the *schmaltz* elongated and the sadism utterly gratuitous: the kind of sadism that packs 'em in.

THERE ARE TIMES when, even by the film's own standards, the slick runs precariously thin; the strong, silent Batman-jawed Robert DeNiro and the brave, sensitive, baby-faced Boy Wonder Christopher Warren could not merely suffer in captivity as soldiers; no, the Dynamic Duo get away by wiping out a house-full of their barbaric captors, mighty M-16s rotating from their hips. Pow! Wham! Rat-tat-tat! 'C'mon, let's get outta here!' *ad nauseam*. Big John would have shown them how it's really done.

This is how Hollywood created the myth of the Wild West, which was harmless enough unless you happened to be an American Indian, and how World War Two and the Korean War were absorbed into box office folklore, which was harmless enough unless you happened to be a dumb Kraut or an unspeakable Nip or a Commie chink, or one of a malleable generation and liable to be conditioned by endless, bragging, simplistic

good guy/bad guy images of war. And of course, *The Deer Hunter* is harmless enough unless you happen to be a gook, Commie or otherwise, or of a generation too young to remember genocidal 'free fire zones' and towns and villages that 'had to be destroyed to save them'.

That the same cynical mythmaking is now being applied to Vietnam (there'll be *Deer Hunter 2*, I bet) induces more melancholy than anger in those like myself, who saw whole Vietnamese communities used as guinea pigs for the testing of a range of 'anti-personnel' military technology, and who saw demoralised, brutalised, often mutinous and doped American teenagers lying in their own blood and shit, for the purposes of some pointless, sacrificial siege staged in the cause of nothing, except the gratification of inept brass in their air-conditioned bubbles.

There is not a passing hint in *The Deer Hunter* that Vietnam was, above all, a war of rampant technology against human beings. There are, however, heavenly violins.

Richard Grenier, the New York critic, tells me that the director of *The Deer Hunter*, Michael Cimino, is being hailed in America as the champion of the 'new patriotism'. Linda Christmas of the *Guardian* reported Cimino as saying

During the making of the film, I certainly had a sense that we were doing something special. It was such an agonising experience both emotionally, physically — the tropics, the heat, the humidity. I can't shake off *The Deer Hunter* even now. I have this insane feeling that I was there, in Vietnam. Somehow the fine wires have got really crossed and the line between reality and fiction has become blurred.

The above is how you 'sell' and justify a myth. Cimino is an expert salesman. He sold *The Deer Hunter* without a script. Originally, it was to be the recollections of a group of former GIs, but what helped to convince the major backers that they were on to a winner were the orgiastic Russian roulette scenes that recur throughout the film and leave an audience with the impression that the Vietnamese gamble on human life as casually as the British gamble on the pools.

How odd: in Vietnam, I never heard about this game. I have asked other correspondents and they have never heard about this game. And interviews with POWs never mentioned this game; but much of Cimino's picture is given over to this 'meaningful horror', which he insists happened and which is meant to be somehow redemptive.

There is another problem. Although Cimino says he has 'this insane feeling that I was there, in Vietnam', he was never there. He told Linda Christmas, and Leticia Kent of the *New York Times*, that he was called up shortly after the *Tet* offensive in 1968 and was a medic attached to the Green Berets. He 'missed' Vietnam because, he says, he had a job 'involved in defence and classified. Something to do with that . . .'

The Pentagon's records tell a different story. He was in the army reserve before draftees were sent to Vietnam and was pursu-

Medical Aid Committee for Vietnam



Above: Napalm victim, Right: 'Five close friends who face danger together.' From press blurb for the *Deer Hunter*.



ing a career in advertising at the time of *Tet*. These minor discrepancies would matter little, except that they may help to explain something about the source of *The Deer Hunter*'s mythmaking.

The timing of *The Deer Hunter* is perfect. The 'new patriotism' and the mood of the national redemption decree that it is time the American conscience was salved and the Vietnamese 'punished' for defeating and humiliating the greatest power on earth. Last month, Vietnam was attacked by America's new ally, China, on the pretext that the Vietnamese were the stooges of Moscow. The American Government condemned the Chinese action with all the force of a verbal leg-slap, while linking it, astutely, to a condemnation of Hanoi's overthrow of the genocidal regime in Cambodia; there was no mention that Cambodia had attacked Vietnam in 1977.

During these past weeks of 'punishment' – when the Vietnamese, by most accounts, stopped their latest invader – official Washington statements neglected to mention that the Vietnamese had been pleading for diplomatic ties with America with such desperation that they had dropped all previous demands for reparations; that for two years the Vietnamese, having maintained their independence from both Russia and China during the war years, had resisted Russian pressure to sign a 'friendship treaty', until they had no choice; that the Americans ignored these overtures and used their influence to prevent Asian Development Bank funds going to Vietnam for desperately needed reconstruction aid.

And who now is vocal in backing China's 'punishment' of Vietnam, and China's ambition to 'smash the myth of Vietnam's invincibility'? William C. Westmoreland, one of the chief architects of American vandalism (and defeat) in Vietnam; Senator John Tower, hero of the far right; Nguyen Ky, former President of South Vietnam (now in the liquor business in California); patriots all.

I WAS IN VIETNAM last year. It seems  
New Statesman 16 March 1979

incredible that there is still need to offer reminders of what was done to that nation. But, with Hollywood now re-making history, and with current events being reported so as to make the Vietnamese appear as Oriental Prussians, such reminders are necessary.

Much of North Vietnam is a moonscape, from which visible signs of life – houses, factories, schools, hospitals, pagodas, churches – have been obliterated.\* Forty-four per cent of the forests have been destroyed; in many of those still standing there are no longer birds and animals; and there are lorry drivers who will not respond to the hooting of a horn because they are deaf from the incessant sound of bombs; and there are some 30,000 children in Hanoi and Haiphong alone who are permanently deaf as a result of the American bombing at Christmas 1972.

The B52s spared the spacious French-built centre of the cities and laid 'carpets' of bombs down such crowded arteries as Kham Thiem Street in Hanoi, where today an old nicotine-stained figure with a wispy beard keeps a vigil at a gap where 283 people died. 'It was a block of flats', he told me, 'we were mostly the old, women and children. There was no time to reach the shelters, and we sang as the bombs came down... singing is louder than bombs'. Such dignity, out of horror, is representative of the Vietnamese and differs sharply from Mr Cimino's fantasies. (More bombs were dropped on Vietnam than ever dropped during all of World War Two and Korea combined: the greatest aerial onslaught ever.)

In Hanoi's Bach Mai Hospital, doctors have discovered that 'Napalm B', which the Dow Chemical Company created especially for Vietnam, continues to smoulder under the skin's tissues through the lifetime of its victims. People continue to die from the effects of plastic needles which were sprayed by bombs created especially for Vietnam and designed so that the needles moved through human organs and escape detection, even under X-ray.

Places called Ham Long and Dong Loc ought to be as well known as Dresden, but

they are not. Ham Long, like so many towns in the north, was bombed literally back to the Stone Age: every day for four years, from five in the morning till two in the afternoon, the planes came in low from carriers in the South China Sea. At Cu Chi, in the south, an horizon that was once thick vegetation now shimmers in the heat, laid completely to waste 'for maybe half a century or more', according to the report of one member of an American Academy of Science team. This is the result of 'Operation Hades' (later Hollywoodised to 'Operation Ranch Hand'): the defoliation and poisoning of the landscape and crops, and the sowing of the seeds of human mutations for generations. In 1970 I wrote about a 'foetal disaster' at the Tu Duc Hospital in Saigon where deformed babies were beginning to arrive by the dozen: the result, said American doctors at the time, of an aerial spray called 2,4,5,-T, which is banned in the United States.

That is enough, I suppose. There are the tens of thousands of heroin addicts, and a strain of VD for which there is no certain cure. There are the permanently dislocated and the insane, who ran from General Westmoreland's 'free fire zones'. And there are the thousands of American-fathered children; several of them were singing this song when I visited a Saigon orphanage: 'The war is gone... planes come no more... do not weep for those just born... the human being is evergreen'. If you see *The Deer Hunter*, you may like to remember these words.

John Pilger is a special writer with the Daily Mirror.

**\*Next week, General Westmoreland arrives in Britain to publicise an illustrated history of the Vietnam war. Its 550 photographs are principally concerned with American tanks, helicopters, planes, artillery and other weapons in spectacular action. Its section on 'The Air War against North Vietnam' makes no reference to civilian casualties. General Westmoreland's foreword is, apparently, 'a hard-hitting comment on the effect of political influences on the military performance of the anti-Communist forces'.**

# The Beta Blockade

NOT LONG AGO, the Department of Health and Social Security turned down requests to undertake a clinical trial using the drug oxprenolol on those unable, through sheer nervousness, to pass the driving test. Ciba-Geigy, who market the drug, widely used for heart ailments, have been refused a licence to advertise it as an anxiety-reducer, even though the beneficial effects of beta-blockers on such disparately-stressed citizens as airline pilots, racing drivers, musicians, surgeons and public speakers are well known. RUTH HALL traces the history of this group of drugs, possibly the major pharmacological development of the last decade, looks at the implications – and tries them out on herself.

IN HIS ESSAY *On the Sublime and the Beautiful*, Burke observed that no passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers and reasoning as fear. I know exactly what he meant. An aspiring musician of greater ambition than talent, I was horrified to discover that, relatively competent in private, once on the concert platform I became an inchoate mass of unco-ordinated tissue. I had palpitations, my fingers trembled uncontrollably at the keyboard and my feet beat out an unconscious tattoo – not even in time with the alleged music. Fear feeding on itself, I would then break down completely.

'It's all a matter of *character*', my teacher, Rafael Puyana, chided me. John Williams, the guitarist, thought that vanity was the root of the problem. ('You just can't bear to make a fool of yourself in public.') I tried Character, essayed lack of vanity. Nothing worked. Alcohol sometimes helped but its effects, at least for me, were impossible to gauge. Hypnosis failed, as did a drug which a medical friend described as 'polypharmacy at its worst' (a mixture of amphetamine, barbiturates and aspirin). I gave up and returned to the typewriter: at least the audience is further away.

I was lucky only in that music was not my main career. But what of those whose livelihood depends on the ability to conquer stage-fright? Managements being reluctant to engage those subject to sudden musical paralysis, few musicians are willing to admit to nervousness, though it is known to affect even the supremely talented. Sibelius gave up being a violinist because of it. Horowitz rejected public performance for 15 years, and Glenn Gould still limits his brilliance to the recording studios.

Last year, I heard about an experiment at the Wigmore Hall, involving 24 nervous violinists who had volunteered for a double-blind clinical trial of a drug called oxprenolol. Under the direction of Dr Ian James, senior lecturer in clinical pharmacology at the Royal Free Hospital, each was to play twice – once using the drug, once on a placebo – though none knew which had been swallowed before performance.

Oxprenolol is a 'beta blocker': one of a group of drugs developed to deal with heart



disease. Despite setbacks – an earlier version, practolol, was withdrawn when several patients went blind – later variants proved highly successful in treating angina, and in reducing high blood pressure. As is often the case in medicine, no-one understands exactly how they work. But it appears that beta-blockers, by competing with the effects of adrenaline, can reduce nervousness and tremor without the sedative effects of tranquillisers like valium and librium.

Adrenaline was useful in the primitive 'fight-or-flight' reaction for producing menacing trembles when confronted by hairy opponents, or for generating enough energy to run away as fast as possible. Fear is a learned response, and adrenaline causes its effects throughout the body by slotting into socket-like structures on the surface of cells (receptors). These are of two sorts, called for convenience *alpha* and *beta*. It so happens that the activation of beta-receptors is associated with the symptoms of fear – rapid pulse rate, tremor, sweating and so on. Until recently, the conventional treatment for such symptoms was to prescribe sedative drugs acting generally on the brain. Beta-blockers act directly on the beta-receptors themselves, antagonising the symptoms of adrenaline production. For musicians alone, not to mention all others subject to stage-fright, the implications are considerable. Adrenaline might be useful in a fight, but it is not so relevant when it merely causes weak knees, unlovely mistakes, and uncontrollable bouncings of bow on string, or finger on keyboard.

The trial was difficult to set up. Dr James,

himself a viola-player, first advertised in the *Strad* magazine. 'Do your nerves let you down when you are asked to play a solo or an exposed passage in public?' No-one replied, probably being too nervous.

He then changed tack with the more reassuring question, 'Are you a Wigmore Hall recitalist?' It was not until later, when it would have been too shaming to withdraw, that the nervous guinea-pigs realised the horrors they would have to face.

The atmosphere, deliberately-engineered, could not have been more nerve-wracking. It is bad enough to make a debut at the Wigmore Hall, graveyard of many a talent. But to do so before a large audience, a jury of musical assessors, television cameras, frightening arrays of recording and monitoring equipment, and radio and newspaper reporters demanding interviews is practically intolerable.

Interestingly, only one performer indulged in the classic flight reaction. She locked herself in the Ladies and only came out after a ten-minute lecture from Dr James: 'It is your duty to medical science to complete this experiment'.

THE RESULTS were significant. Nervousness and tremor were reduced, heart rate and blood pressure were lower. Musically, too, performance improved on the drug. The assessment was carried out 'blind' by two professional musicians, accustomed to adjudication. They were unaware which performers were on the drug or on placebo, nor did they know of previous medical and musical assess-

ments, or of each other's scoring. A further heartening result was that those who played *first* with oxprenolol and *then* with the placebo maintained the improvement on their second performance, suggesting that if anxiety breeds from itself, so does confidence. The public response to the Wigmore Hall experiment was such as to suggest that the whole world might benefit from beta-blockers being injected into the water supply. Reports of the event, and a radio talk by Dr James relayed on BBC World Service, evoked an enormous correspondence. A 23-year-old Indian chemical engineer wrote of his suffocation feelings:

This results in blocking of my various talents. A circle of fear is so vicious that the resulting panic gives rise to shaky hand and liquidisation of legs, incoherent speech, mental blackout, etc. I hope that this finds you in profound health.

Nearer home those asking for help included dentists with nervous hand tremor, a 13-year-old girl gymnast who in competitions invariably fell off the beam, 'because my legs wobble so much due to nerves' and a 38-year-old woman who had lately taken up horse-riding, something she had always wanted to do, 'but just lately I have been feeling increasingly nervous before I go, my finger tips turn blue and I feel exhausted just driving to the stables'.

My own panic began a few weeks ago when Bruce Page, our editor, said with his customary charm: 'As someone who didn't quite make it as a musician, why don't you write about beta-blockers?' Failing to think of a cutting reply, I telephoned Dr James, but pointed out that my interest was purely academic. I last performed in public eight years ago, disastrously, and had no intention of repeating the experience. 'Nonsense', he replied, 'We'll put you on at the Royal Free', (useful if you drop dead, I suppose) 'and I can assure you that you will feel no fear.'

As a scientific experiment, it would not have made the pages of the *Lancet*. For a start, I would not risk being given a placebo, so got my oxprenolol elsewhere, just in case Dr James was up to any of his pharmacological tricks. I also insisted on sharing the burden with Neil Fairbairn, a bassoonist friend whose nervousness almost approaches my own.

Under duress, his lip sometimes goes, his lungs seize up and, he claims (though prone to exaggeration) that he becomes cataleptic. 'My arm's gone spastic', he said at our first rehearsal. 'That's nothing, I can't even see the music', I said.

As the day of the concert approached, my nightmares became intolerable. Every night, about 3 a.m., a subconscious tape-recorder played back the whole programme with mistakes in every other bar – and sometimes without Neil, who is spastically twitching in a casualty department. I telephoned Dr James. He advised beta-blockers to get me through the phantom performances.

Six days before the concert, we gave a trial performance to a few friends. Dr James took my pulse, looked surprised, and said 'Hmm'. I had taken 40mg of oxprenolol, as advised, an hour before.

'What's wrong, am I dying?' I asked. No, it was just interesting, he replied. Only after the concert did he tell me that my heart rate had not been significantly reduced by the drug – although Neil's had. Dr James doubled the dosage – for me, not Neil.

ON THE DAY of the concert, Neil and I were  
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in a state of only moderate panic, confusion and despair. I was further reassured to think that there would be virtually no audience. As a charitable venture, the concert could not be advertised except within the hospital, and with any luck the 500-seater assembly hall would be merely dotted with walking wounded and the occasional wheelchair.

On arriving for final rehearsal, I was horrified to find the whole hospital plastered with posters, complete with attention-creating bright red stickers, normally used to indicate infective hepatitis. ('Is there an epidemic?' one nursing sister anxiously asked.) Then, it transpired, my brother had been going round sticking large notices about the concert on Hampstead trees, of which there are many.

Eschewing our determination – in the interests of medical science – to take no drugs other than oxprenolol, Neil and I fled over to the Roebuck for a large vodka, thereby missing the appointment to have cardiac monitors affixed to our torsos. Even so, when our pulses were taken, Neil's was so low as to indicate, if not death, something approaching normality, and my own heart-rate had declined dramatically. We still felt a little nervous but needed only a gentle shove to get us on stage. Once started, the effects of the drug were little short of miraculous.

There were problems. I had deliberately chosen to use a lot of registration, including the 16-foot stop, partly as a way of cocking a snook at the current orthodoxy of 'authenticity'. I had also chosen to play, in my first group of solos, two of Padre Antonio Soler's most difficult sonatas.

My goodness, I messed it up. I was wearing a tight satin jacket, which I had never played in before. When it came to the leaps, cross keyboard, I literally couldn't reach them. My friend Clive, turning the pages for me, operated the 16-foot stop. I was by now so calm that I merely found it funny to have a Harris-tweed clad leg insinuating itself between my neo-Mozartian white satin.

My mistakes were due to incompetence, not nerves, and I simply thought, well better luck next time. When I came to the Bach 5th French Suite, which I know backwards, there was no problem. A person in the front row was twiddling his tape-recorder, whirring it back and forth. All I thought was: 'There's Colin Purbrook, having fun'.

THOUGH MY OWN experience (and that of my musical friends who emptied my bottle of beta-blockers faster than you can say 'Beethoven's late quartets') is not by any means rare, there is still a lot of prejudice against the use of drugs to combat stress – even though it can be argued that the reduction of stress might well lessen the incidence of cardiac disease. In America, some surgeons are accused of deliberately withholding beta-blockade because it might reduce the demand for heart by-pass surgery, thus cutting their considerable profits. (This is scarcely an argument that applies to the NHS.)

Many musicians themselves pay lip-service to the idea that nervousness is a necessary catalyst to good performance – another aspect of the puritanical attitude that because something is unpleasant, it is therefore both virtuous and rewarding. Yet I cannot see why talent should be destroyed by the refusal to use drugs when all else had failed.

Two years ago, Dr James was on the side of the cautious. Now, after experiments and the

thousands of letters he has received, his stance had changed. If music, or flying, or ballet-dancing is someone's livelihood, he now argues, why jeopardise it when the problem can be solved pharmacologically? It is not always easy to follow up, over such a short period, the subsequent careers of those who have asked for advice. Yet, only in the past fortnight, Dr James has had letters from a woman previously unable to pass her shorthand exams because of trembling hands, to say that she had finally succeeded; and from a violinist with a major London orchestra, whose nervousness was such that it was beginning to affect those around him. He disappeared for a week or two, took beta-blockers, and is now back with the orchestra, restored to confidence.

At levels other than the musical, ethical considerations remain. How, for example, do you conduct a double-blind trial with university students sitting finals? Similarly, beta-blockers have been banned in Olympic shooting competitions because the drug enhances performances by reducing nervousness and improving aim. What, people ask, would happen to warfare, should soldiers be permanently beta-blocked?

CONTINUING OPPOSITION to the drug also raises yet again the question of what medicine should be about. Are drugs there to cure certified disease, or should they also alleviate individual social misery?

The question is prompted by the DHSS's response to Dr James's request to undertake clinical trials of oxprenolol on those who had failed the driving test because, in the opinion of their driving instructors, of 'stage-fright'. After the Wigmore Hall trial, a 26-year-old woman wrote to Dr James: 'I drive perfectly well until I sit with an examiner and then my nerves go to pieces and I fumble. Even my husband admits I am a very good driver...' With many such letters arriving, Dr James set up a trial, about which he informed the DHSS and the Department of Transport.

The latter replied at length, detailing the drug's side-effects – rashes and fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and constipation. 'More importantly we gather that hallucinations, nightmares, insomnia, lassitude and depression have all been recorded.' In fact, side-effects are very rare and I know of no report whatsoever of 'hallucinations'.

In its turn, the DHSS, concerned at the amount of publicity the projected trial had already received, wrote back equally discouragingly, ending with the veiled threat:

'You will no doubt be aware that a contravention of section 31 of the Medicines Act constitutes a criminal offence.'

Dr James replied that the subjects were all volunteers. Yes, the DHSS retorted, but were they normal? Certainly, he said, their only problem was that they became nervous when taking the driving test. In that case, the DHSS triumphantly replied, they were not normal – a classic Catch-22.

A spokesman for the manufacturers, Ciba-Geigy, thought that one explanation for the refusal to allow clinical trials might be that the authorities would consider its use in driving tests a trivial use of a major drug. Surely its wider application could only help to cure individual misery – and perhaps even reduce the NHS bill for those diseases caused by the original failure to alleviate them.

# The Labour Manifesto: Right . . .

Last week the Labour Coordinating Committee, a Left wing grouping inside the Labour party, produced an alternative view of the official manifesto presently being discussed by the Party's National Executive Committee. In their magazine *Labour Activist* the group said 'Governments have blamed the recession on inflation. Our view is the reverse. The recession has made inflation worse by raising costs through unemployment and underutilisation of capacity. Companies have maintained profits by passing

on these costs. As prices have risen and Government services have been cut workers' living standards have suffered, forcing them to put in large defensive claims'. John Cartwright is the present chairman of the Manifesto Group and a former member of the NEC. Andrew Glyn teaches economics at the University of Oxford. With Bob Sutcliffe he is the author of *British Capitalism, the Workers and the Profits Squeeze*, Penguin 1972. He is a member of the Labour Party and supports the *Militant* newspaper.

## The Right

### John Cartwright

The villains are the two giants, international banking and multinational companies. The heroine is British industry, whom they rape and leave for dead. The saviour is the knight on the white horse who will bring her to life with the kiss of a compulsory planning agreement. That, of course, is a gross travesty of the picture presented in *Labour Activist* in its proposals for Labour's election manifesto. But it is deserved. For the analysis on which they base their plan for economic recovery is so partial and tendentious that they seem to be describing a fictional world.

There is, it is true, much in LA's proposals, and in the National Executive's draft, with which most of us in the Labour Party would agree. But however necessary in themselves are plans for constitutional reform, more open government, better social programmes and so on, we all know that the overriding issue at the next election is how to make the British industrial economy work better. The Tories want to go back to the policies that didn't work in 1970. What are *we* going to argue?

We must not base our policies on pretence. It is simply irresponsible for LA to pretend, for example, that 'as prices have risen and government services have been cut, workers' living standards have suffered forcing them to put in large defensive pay claims'. That is nonsense. Although it is nothing to boast about, it is a fact that average living standards in Britain have never been higher. There certainly still remains very real poverty, and the slow growth of productivity over 20 years means we are not as well off as we should be. But it is no good pretending we are worse off than we were. Real living standards last year went up by 8 per cent. So how can many of this winter's high pay claims seriously be described as 'defensive'?

If LA's analysis is wholly misleading, their solution is incredible. The heart of their proposals for recovery is the implicit belief that what British industry needs is more inflation. 'Full employment should be specifically named as the first priority of the next Labour Government, taking precedence over inflation.' There would be no point in saying that, if LA did not recognise that their policies for full employment would lead to faster inflation. They are right in that. They propose public spending increases of £3 billion a year without increased taxation. This is to be paid for by economic growth. But that rate of increase in public spending is more than twice the average annual rate of economic growth we have achieved in the last 20 years. Perhaps LA

believes the Government should fund this increased spending by borrowing more from the private sector. But that would simply push up interest rates which are already too high, and so would help neither unemployment nor economic growth. Alternatively, LA may simply want the Government to print the money to pay for much of their increased spending. But that means accelerating inflation, which far from curing unemployment, makes it worse. For no trading nation can allow its inflation rate to soar above its competitors', and so to stop it doing so we would then have emergency spending cuts and credit squeezes, and people would lose jobs. LA's wishful thinking would not prevent that. Whichever way they tell it, this old, old fairy story never has a happy ending.

All this is so well known, LA must just have stopped listening long ago. But there is one further argument that ought to make them pause in their profligate application of what presumably they regard as Keynesian policies. For it is a purely Keynesian argument. Inflation makes people save more of what they earn. It may be irrational, but it has happened throughout the western world in the last 15 years. In Britain the savings ratio has doubled. More savings mean less spending. Less spending means less demand, and less demand means fewer jobs. The point is that Keynes argued for public spending in order to put to use the private savings that industry did not wish to borrow. But increased public spending that risks faster inflation will *increase* savings and so make the initial problem even worse. Keynes may have observed that in the long run we're all dead, but he didn't advocate suicide.

So there is a clear limit to what public spending can do to cut unemployment. Accepting this fact causes great difficulty for many in the Labour Party. For we are, and will remain, the party of public spending so long as we go on protesting about inequalities in society and pointing out people's needs. But we must face the fact that public spending must be paid for. That's why we also need an industrial policy. The LCC's version is depressingly irrelevant. They are full of tough talk about power and control, but don't make clear what should be done with the power when they've got it. The NEB, we are told, 'should have the power to acquire big companies wherever necessary for reindustrialisation.' But how *do* we reindustrialise? Nationalisation can be necessary, but it is never a complete answer. There is still the problem of running the industry once we've taken it into public ownership.

The same goes for LCC's championship of compulsory planning agreements. A compulsory agreement is a contradiction in terms, but

as an answer to the problem of our industrial weakness, it begs the question of what it is that we should all be agreeing to do. All we're told is that if firms don't do what the minister wants, he (or rather his civil servants) will move in with powers to change pricing policies, issue directives, sack directors and so on. If the Government gives funds to a firm, it must certainly make sure the money is well used. But this obsessive yet complacent fashion, for compulsory planning agreements everywhere, smacks of a military and bureaucratic love of order and administration for their own sake. How businessmen, trade unionists and civil servants sitting round an agenda are suddenly inspired to enterprise, innovation, initiative and risk-taking, is never explained.

In an unobtrusive and unconnected paragraph, Tony Benn's friends on the LCC give the game away about the narrow, bureaucratic nature of the call for compulsory planning agreements. They propose that 'a coherent programme for public expenditure on the NHS, housing, education, social security and other public services should be drawn with targets and costings'. That is extraordinary. For we have already got a 'coherent programme'. What else are the PESC system and the annual Government Spending White Paper? LCC seems unable to get beyond the *idea* of simply wanting a programme, to the real question of what that programme should do. Similarly, we're asked to pin our faith in nationalisation and compulsory planning agreements without being told what they will achieve or how. So what *should* the manifesto say on economic and industrial policy? Conquering inflation must remain first priority. We won't reduce unemployment unless it is. We must reaffirm the joint Government and TUC aim of cutting the inflation rate to 5 per cent in three years. We should promise to follow sensible fiscal policies. We should promise not to pursue inflationary monetary policies like the Tories followed. We must review the way the Government funds its borrowing needs. We must go to the country as the party of incomes policy. We must preach a permanent policy, bringing justice as well as order into pay bargaining, with a widely-respected permanent commission to deal with relativities and special cases. We must defend the Price Commission against the Tories, as a vital part of anti-inflation and competition policies.

We should not be tempted by import controls. The LCC, cloaking an old idea in a new euphemism, sees Britain as pioneer of 'trade planning', but their plan for import controls leading to an *increase* in imports is simply a disguised form of excessive demand management. They are far too optimistic that the

## and Left

increased income necessary to pay for the increased imports will quickly materialise through faster growth and more exports. Britain, with its unique advantage of North Sea Oil, is bound to suffer retaliation.

We should champion the NEDO sector working parties, even though their invaluable, detailed and painstaking work never hits the

headlines. We must encourage co-operative enterprise, profit-sharing and the NEB to fund innovation. We must guarantee training and retraining opportunities, we must legislate on industrial democracy and we must reform the tax system.

Finally governments can help, but they can also hinder. The politics which pretend that

with one bound we can be free are just such a hindrance. Too much of what the LCC proposes is born of that pretence. It creates public disillusionment, and in the Party it would lead to despondency, recrimination and defeat. The Labour Party has more important things to do than sit on the opposition benches telling fairy stories.

### The Left

Andrew Glyn

*Labour Activist* quite correctly criticises the Labour Party's draft manifesto for not providing a 'socialist analysis of the international crisis and of Britain's problems' and for 'failing to analyse the obstacle to democracy, socialism and prosperity formed by the class system, the structure of government and management.' But does its own 'Manifesto for a socialist Britain' do better?

LA's own analysis of the crisis in the world economy is hopelessly inadequate. It says that the recession has been caused by the '*mistaken response*' (my emphasis) of governments to the end of the post-war boom and the breakdown in western financial and trading arrangements. But 'mistaken' in whose terms? High unemployment is intended to hold down wages and pave the way for rationalisation of industry. Capitalists throughout the world fear that any attempt at reflation and expansion would soon collapse amidst accelerating inflation as happened during the last attempt at expansion in 1972-3. With profitability even lower than it was then, with memories of rapid inflation fresh and the prospect of booming markets fading, it is probable that the collapse would be even quicker this time round. It is ludicrous to say, as LA does, that 'as each country in turn faces the threat or the reality of a currency crisis, its government deflates in order to protect itself against speculation.' But what about Germany and Japan, whose currencies are strong? Calling the world slump 'the moral and practical responsibility of western industrialised countries' is quite absurd when the interests of the capitalist class and not 'mistakes' dictate the policies now being followed.

LA says that the next Labour government must 'reassert control over the British economy lost as a consequence of the growth of multinational banking and trade and our entry into the EEC.' But did the Labour government really have that much more control in 1964, before Britain was in the EEC and when the internationalisation of the British economy was less advanced? Or in 1931? Not at all. The 'lack of control' of the Labour government reflects the fact that the overwhelming proportion of the means of production and the financial system are under the control of the capitalist class. Blaming internationalisation is looking to a symptom rather than the cause.

In dealing with import controls, LA brushes away the objection that they would mean trade retaliation by arguing that 'we cannot reasonably be expected to do more than allow imports and exports as a whole to rise together.' But there is nothing 'reasonable'

about competition in world markets. If exporting industries in the advanced capitalist countries find themselves deprived of full access to a rapidly growing market in the UK they will exert maximum pressure for retaliation, which would lead to jobs lost in UK export industries. Saying imports were not below what they would have been anyway will cut no ice with workers abroad who would see import controls as directed against them and will join their bosses in demanding retaliatory action. This is not to support free trade: neither capitalist protection nor capitalist free trade offers a solution.

LA says quite correctly that 'Full employment should be named as the first priority of the next Labour government', and calls for 'an explicit plan for reflation and the return to full employment including increases of public spending of £3000 million a year.' Such increases would certainly make possible many of the improvements in health, welfare etc. which the draft manifesto calls for. But how would they be financed? LA says 'not by tax increases but largely by saving on unemployment benefit and higher tax yields from economic growth.' But this would not cover all the extra expenditure. There is no explanation of how the financial institutions could be forced to finance a greater level of public borrowing. The Labour Party's draft manifesto itself shamefully waters down the 1977 Conference demand for nationalisation of the banks and major insurance companies into a pathetic scheme to unite the Giro and National Savings Bank and to give 'serious consideration as to how best to create a further substantial public stake.' LA does not comment on this and so presumably does not accept the necessity of nationalisation of the finance sector to free the Government from the dictates of the City.

LA also ignores the inflation which would result from reflation, as businesses tried to restore profitability – still less than one third of the level of the early sixties. Does LA, like some other proponents of the Alternative Economic Strategy, want stringent price controls? If so, how far could such an expansion go without seizing up from lack of profitability, given that the overwhelming proportion of industry would be in private hands and thus operating according to the capitalist criterion of profitability? Or does LA propose an incomes policy to guarantee profitable, and thus capitalistically sustainable, expansion? Given capitalism's need to increase profitability, an attempt to expand on a capitalist basis can only mean holding back the growth of real wages. LA fails to analyse such contradictions of capitalist reflation.

The draft Labour Party manifesto calls for £1000 million a year for the NEB and specifically for 'a major public stake in pharmaceuticals, building materials and construction.' The

idea of a commitment to a 10-year housing plan has been dropped: buttressed by nationalisation of the industries concerned, including finance, this could have been the basis of a real socialist plan for housing. LA itself has no more specific programme of nationalisation than the draft, just calling for the NEB to have the 'power to acquire big companies wherever necessary for reindustrialisation'. LA puts much weight on forcing businessmen in 'key manufacturing industries' to implement the government's 'investment, production and employment targets' through compulsory planning agreements. But it would be absurd to imagine that businessmen will give up their most basic prerogative – control over where they accumulate capital. The authority of a parliamentary majority will never make the business and financial community accept the directives of a Labour government. The Labour movement already has the experience of their scornful treatment of planning agreements. Bob Cryer, one of LA's steering committee, said recently in the House of Commons: 'In view of the massive amounts of aid to industry which this government has been giving ... it seems that industry could develop a more co-operative attitude to planning agreements.' But LA is silent on how to ensure a 'more co-operative attitude'.

Only the nationalisation of the 200 or so companies which control 60 per cent or more of the assets in the UK would be the indispensable minimum for securing real control over, and thus the ability to plan, the economy. This should be on the basis not only of 'workers' control at the plant level' as LA advocates; but also with workers' management of the industries carried out by workers from the unions in the industry concerned, from the TUC to represent other workers' interests as consumers, and with government representatives to ensure that the plans of the individual industry and enterprise mesh in with the needs of society as a whole. LA's suggestion of 'joint worker-management control below board level in industries and services' is just a recipe for workers taking responsibility for management decisions. Rather than LA's call for a wealth tax which, though obviously a welcome measure, would never affect the huge holdings of shares which give control over British business, nationalisation compensation should be on the basis of proven need.

Neither the Labour Party draft, nor the LA manifesto adds up to an adequate basis on which to secure real control over the economy. I believe that the absolutely necessary advances of a decent minimum wage, a real expansion of housebuilding, full employment and so on can only be secured and guaranteed by a socialist plan of production based on the far-reaching socialist programme I have just outlined.

## The Machismo of Washington

ONE OF THE FEW relics of the Nixon presidency still preserved in the Carter White House is a location, deep in the basement of the old executive office building and known fondly to the Democrats (after its best-known Republican habitué) as the Ehrlichman Memorial Sauna and Exercise Room.

Here each alternate day, the President's men—on every other day, the women—flex their muscles, sweat and strop themselves with sticks. Carter, who has taken away virtually all the traditional perquisites of office from his staff (he even charges for the hotdogs at summer staff picnics), is known to encourage this type of exercise. With limited space and heavy demand, the sauna room consequently rewards those who return to their desks, faces beet-red and weals across their buttocks, with notable if unwidely appreciated marks of privilege. The lesson this inspires—one which staff are eager to prove to their chief they have learned with alacrity—is nothing maintains morale quite as much as the rush of masculinity that comes from the good strop of a stick.

All modern presidents have had their crises of political masculinity, when confronted by drooping polls and egged on by their advisers to reflection, they strop their sticks. Theodore Roosevelt, the original Rough Rider, managed to contrive an international incident over the abduction in Morocco of a man with dubious claim to American citizenship. Although his release had been quietly negotiated by the Moroccans themselves, the US ultimatum—the American alive or Moroccans dead,—together with the appearance of the warship *Brooklyn* in Tangier Bay, proved to be phenomenally popular for the president on election day, November 1904.

I trust that none of you has forgotten the legitimising of America's Vietnam intervention through the Tonkin Gulf Incident of 5 August 1964. What you may not know is that at the time, facing the uncertainties of the November election with Barry Goldwater, President Johnson was having recurrent nightmares. In one he would dream that like his old grandmother back on the childhood ranch, he was paralyzed from the neck down, while he could hear his advisers talking about usurping his power. In another dream he saw himself as a cowboy whose horse sticks its foot in a hole and is thrown under the feet of a thousand stampeding longhorns. After Tonkin Gulf these nightmares receded, and disappeared altogether after the landslide poll of that year. (They returned just under four years later.)

It has not been confirmed whether Gerald Ford used to have bad dreams, but his determination to recapture the American merchantman, *Mayaguez*, by military means, after the Cambodians had offered release through diplomatic channels—1,000 Marines landed, 38 killed for the return of the 39 crew—was as domestically reassuring as anything else he accomplished in office.

THE LESSON HAS not been lost on Jimmy Carter. Indeed within weeks of inauguration he pestered the Coast Guard to board two Russian fishing trawlers allegedly poach-

ing haddock off the Massachusetts coast, and bring them back to shore at gunpoint—his most popular act for all of 1977.

Stick-stropping exercises in the privacy of one's coastline are one thing, and the traditional benefits cannot be questioned. But the same cannot be said of exercises in foreign parts. For one thing, the American people like their military adventures to be brief and bloodless. They also prefer sure things to risks. The polls show, for example, that as soon as American soldiers begin to get killed, support for presidential military action declines in a mathematically exact relationship to the number of casualties reported.

From the presidential perspective therefore (and independently this has been confirmed in the recent release of a Brookings Institution study of American military interventions since World War II), the optimum tactic abroad is to intervene with ships and aircraft, instead of ground troops, and do so against countries so small or underarmed as to be cowed without a shot. The Brookings scholars, who include men currently in command of the US Arms Control Agency, the CIA and the Middle East section of the National Security Council, also reported that, 'favourable outcomes' are least assured by 'coercive talk', and most 'positively' by combat aircraft, particularly when the Soviet Union has no forces directly involved on the other side. Down in the sauna room this is the way they talk.

Within the last twelve weeks, the President has launched as many military actions or threats as has been the annual presidential average since 1948. But if the current rate of stick-stropping abroad is also more frequent than any other post-war president's, Carter's record of success has been less readily comparable. While there have been no crises as yet to recall LBJ's dream of the American cowboy trampled by stampeding communist cows, here is a sampler of what has been happening:

■ In December the President was sharply attacked for failing to act resolutely enough in the face of the Shah's impending demise. He ordered the aircraft carrier *Constellation* from its base in the Philippines but called it back from the mission to the Persian Gulf after just three days' steaming.

■ A further plan to land a contingent of Marines 'to provide for the orderly evacuation of US personnel in Teheran' had to be called off in early February when the Turkish government refused permission for the soldiers to use its territory for staging the mission. The helicopters and their refueling tankers went to Eastern Turkey without them, and the Islamic revolutionaries captured the embassy (the satellite listening posts, etc.) without resistance.

■ In January the president sent a dozen unarmed F-15 fighters to Saudi Arabia in an operation code-named 'Prized Eagle'. The Saudis apparently told the president they preferred the planes to an aircraft carrier, but few of America's other allies in the region cared to receive the planes at all. Only Sudan, Morocco

and Spain would agree to allowing them to land, and each would permit only a fraction of the full dozen.

■ On February 20, Carter missed his chance for a repeat of the *Mayaguez* affair when sailors of the smallest navy in the world, from the Maldive Islands in the Indian Ocean, boarded a private US survey vessel headed for the American naval base on Diego Garcia, taking the ship and 10-man crew prisoner. Nothing has since been heard of the men or the ship, and the Office of Naval Intelligence in Washington stoutly maintains its ignorance of the boat and what it was doing.

■ That week Defence Secretary Harold Brown offered the Saudis to station a troop base on their territory. They declined and asked instead for several kinds of tactical missile the Americans produce for the Israelis. Not only did the Americans say no to that, but when Brown returned to Washington, he told a Sunday television show that the United States will take any action that is appropriate, 'including military force' for 'the protection of the oil flow from the Middle East'. The Saudis thought he was talking about the military base idea again, so they cancelled Prince Fahd's scheduled visit to Washington.

March has been a particularly stropmy month.

■ This week the Pentagon announced plans to reinforce the Diego Garcia base with long-range patrol aircraft, while on March 5, the President ordered the *Constellation* to set sail once more from the Philippines and move to a point off the warring Yemens, along with a 'task force' said to include substantial amphibious landing equipment, helicopters and Marines.

They are to stand by in case the fighters, anti-aircraft artillery and tank rockets which the US has rushed to Sanaa need to be supplemented.

The Jordanians here have indicated that, despite American pleas, they don't want to use them on the Northern Yemenis' behalf, and the Saudis may balk at a return to involvement in Yemen of the Egyptians.

The opinion polls have been notably sluggish in responding to these Presidential thrusts. They may pick up as the Congress begins to debate three bills introduced over the past month which aim to reintroduce military conscription. According to one sponsor, without radical change in army manpower policies, 'the US will likely be forced to restrict its military commitments around the globe.' According to another Republican supporter, Representative Majorie Holt, the Soviets are 'weaving a web around the Persian Gulf' and a bigger army based on the draft is necessary to 'show them that we have the will to keep our civil liberties.'

The sauna room staff aren't sure yet whether to recommend to the President that he come out in favour of conscription. They're just hoping that their horses in Yemen don't get stuck in the desert wadis.

# Jerusalem Diary

□ Far be it from me to pour cold water on an event billed as the most important visit since the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, but Jimmy Carter's make or break peace mission just wasn't up to scratch. I'm prepared to overlook the fact that the cheap dye on the stars and stripes loaned by the American Embassy went gooey in the rain, that Carter couldn't unlock his grin, even at the most inappropriate moments; that only a handful of school children could be cajoled into turning out to cheer their eternal ally, but something basic was missing. O.K., so we had tension – everyone knows that you can't have presidential diplomacy without a bit of cliff-hanging. But there were no leaks, not even from the Israeli cabinet, which is usually about as watertight as a sieve. Nothing. No one knew what was happening. Press morale was low and there wasn't even room for informed speculation. Anxiously pestering the Americans for details of new semantic compromises in the lobby of the King David hotel, or busy interviewing each other in the communications centre, journalists missed the real news. As Carter left for the Knesset dinner on Sunday night, two groups of demonstrators gathered outside the hotel. One bunch, members of Gush Emunim (the lunatic settlement people) wore their usual frenzied stares and carried black umbrellas. The others, from the Peace Now movement, chanted a simple slogan: 'One, two, three, four, we don't want another war.' I hope someone heard them.

□ Peace with Egypt may be only inches away, but old habits die hard. A cabinet minister told me last week that it was impossible to predict what would happen during Carter's talks with Sadat because 'The Arabs', he explained, 'always turn negotiations into an oriental bazaar'. The view that Arabs haggle while Zionists negotiate, is, of course, as old as the conflict itself. Chaim Weizmann used to say that Arabs were good carpet salesmen but not much else. He also predated Begin on the vexed 'linkage' problem by sixty years. In 1918, having failed to convince Palestinian leaders that the Jewish national home would be a good thing, he tried to reach agreement with the Emir Feisal, son of King Hussein of Mecca. Setting off on an arduous journey to see Feisal at his camp in Transjordan, Weizmann wrote to his wife that he was going 'to meet the Hedjaz Arabs, who are more interesting than the local bastards.'

□ Remember the military-industrial complex? One of its cogs wheeled into town last week – before the Presidential entourage arrived – to warn local patriots to nail Jimmy down on a defence pact with Israel. General George Keegan's visit was widely covered by the local press, especially his appearance before members of the Knesset's important foreign affairs and defence committee, whom he warned gravely to think twice about handing Sinai back to Egypt. General K. has impeccable credentials. A former head of US Air Force Intelligence, he used to run a fine line in nuclear brinkmanship, and now devotes a good deal of his time to spouting doom and gloom about 'Soviet imperialism', against which, he believes fervently, Israel is

'the only assurance'. Keegan is the chairman of the newly-established Washington-based Centre for International Security, an 'independent, non-partisan and non-profit organisation . . . established to address issues affecting the security of America and the free world.' Among those issues, the Centre's statement of purpose declares, are;

The upheaval in Iran, recognition of Communist China and our altered relationship with Taiwan, withdrawal of US troops from Korea, Soviet gains in Africa and East Asia . . . the prospective SALT treaty and its implications for the strategic balance.

The significance of these developments, the statement explains 'is discernible only through analyses that focus on how they relate to one another. We aim to explore the connection among things'. One of the pillars of this august but mysterious institution ('grouping former soldiers, diplomats, scholars and businessmen') is an American builder and financier called William Levitt, whose Levitt Overseas Corporation, a group of more than 70 companies, owns over 12 per cent of the concession at the Alma oil field in the Gulf of Suez. After last September's Camp David agreements, Levitt warned that it would be suicidal for Israel to surrender its Sinai drilling rights.

□ In 1977 Levitt completed a \$500m deal with the still stable Shah of Iran to rehabilitate a Teheran slum – a deal described at the time as the 'largest construction contract of its kind signed anywhere in the world in the last half-dozen years'. The millionaire philanthropist has done his bit for Israel too. In 1974 he had the dubious honour of being awarded, together with West German press magnate Axel Springer, an honorary doctorate by Bar-Ilan University for 'services to mankind, Israel and higher education' – not necessarily in that order. With friends like those . . .

□ The Voice of Peace, the pirate radio station run by Abie Nathan 'from somewhere in the Mediterranean', has an unusual jingle: a recording of Sadat's famous declaration, in his theatrical, resonant English – 'The October war should be the last war. No more war.' On Sunday morning, stuck in an immense traffic jam while Jimmy prayed to the god of primaries to make his mission work, only one thing made me laugh. A radio compere announced solemnly, in an excellent parody of Sadat's familiar message 'The six o'clock news should be the last news. No more news.'

□ Kept in the office last week by my harassed news editor and intriguingly contradictory broadcasts on Cairo radio, I was forced to abandon long-standing plans to tackle a broken electric heater at home. But I did manage to find a young man, who introduced himself as Avraham – a standard Israeli name – to come and have a look at it. My wife rang me later to tell me that a miraculous transformation had taken place. Apparently cheered by the friendly atmosphere, Avraham, who spoke fluent Hebrew, had become Ibrahim, a 21-year-old Moslem Arab from East Jerusalem. He told a bitter-sweet tale of life under occupation; how he carries a skullcap ('that little hat') to don in the homes of religious clients, how he tells them, to allay suspicions of his oriental accent and brown skin, that he belongs to the Bukharan Jewish community. He even knows which synagogue he attends. Ibrahim insisted that my wife take

him home, explaining that he never goes by foot or bus to avoid being stopped and searched by policemen and soldiers. The next day, he said, he was going to install air conditioners at a Jewish settlement in the Jordan valley (they evidently expect to be there still in the summer). My wife phoned him at work the next day to tell him he'd forgotten his soldering iron. Not wanting his boss to know that Ibrahim had blown his cover, she asked to speak to Avraham. 'Avraham?' said a puzzled voice at the other end, 'Oh, you mean the Arab.'

□ Ibrahim is relatively lucky. He can at least go home after his day's work, but many Arabs, especially West Bankers and Gazans employed in Tel Aviv, are forced to spend the night – illegally – locked inside restaurant kitchens, garages, carpentry shops, or in usually insanitary and improvised dormitories. There was a minor furore recently when it was revealed that high school pupils serving as volunteers in the Civil Guard had beaten up Arab workers found in Israel after hours and forced them to wade into the sea on a freezing winter night. A TV news reporter later filmed harrowing scenes of the unwelcome *gastarbeiter* in their makeshift quarters and also interviewed pupils at the prestigious Herzliya gymnasium – the Eton of the Israeli labour movement. Did Civil Guard volunteers often use violence against Arabs? The kids were asked. 'Yes', some insisted hotly. 'No, not really', one confident and well-groomed youngster protested, 'What's a kick here, a kick there?' This matter-of-fact attitude – from someone who's not yet even in uniform – gives some perspective to the whole question of the mistreatment of Arab prisoners in Israeli jails. Could the *Sunday Times*, or anyone else, really hope to prove that the military government in the occupied territories has an official *policy* of torturing detainees? General Massu's famous line in Algiers seems appropriate here: 'My policy? I have no policy, I am a soldier'. It is certainly more relevant than the rubbish about 'co-existence' and 'open bridges'.

□ The *Jerusalem Post*'s excellent resident cartoonist, Ya'akov Krischen ('dry bones') was asked by the editors to delay publication of the following minor masterpiece until after Carter found his feet:

'Moshe, we've got it, we've got it!'

'What do we have Menahem?'

'A mutual defence treaty with the United States of America!'

'How long do you think it'll take to work out the details?'

'No time at all. Jimmy brought the papers with him. All we have to do is fill in "Israel" wherever it says "Taiwan."'

**Ian Black**

## This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ The Cumbria Tourist Board is also enthusiastic about the scheme. 'Our reaction is one of pleasure,' said its Press and PR officer Roger Gouldsworthy. 'The guide will service existing needs, and might well create additional demand. It will help Wordsworth become an important marketing feature.' – *Westmoreland Gazette* (A. M. Dobson)

## A political film critic

Sir, Your resident satirist Roger Woddis is asking to have his poetic licence endorsed for writing under the influence of extreme prejudice. In his verse squib 'To a Non-Political Film Critic' (NS 9 March) he lifts the line 'The Deer Hunter is not a political or a polemical film' from the context of an 800 word review of mine (*The Observer* 4 March), and then proceeds to elaborate a libellous fantasy about my alleged political ignorance and tacit approval of genocide, concluding with the calculatedly offensive suggestion that faced with the ovens of Auschwitz I would praise them as works of art.

Only by reprinting the whole of my review could I show NS readers who hadn't read it just how malicious Mr Woddis's poem is. I will, however, quote one brief passage:

Unlike Reisz's *Dog Soldiers*, *The Deer Hunter* deals with an ethnic community largely untouched by the great social currents of the 1960s and is constructed quite deliberately to eliminate discussion of war-aims and the larger issues involved in the Vietnam conflict. This is a grave weakness (some will think it an invalidating one), but it is also what enables Cimino to attain something approaching the tragic grandeur of a popular epic.

Some of your readers may have inferred from Mr Woddis's familiar tone that he and I are intimately acquainted. This is not so. The highly personal form of address comes from his basing his poem on Edgell Rickword's 1938 satire 'To the Wife of a Non-Interventionist Politician', a work, I venture to suggest, unfamiliar to the majority of NS subscribers.

Mr Woddis is entitled to parade his reflex, fellow-travelling attitudes and his rampant Americanophobia as far as you will let him go, though it was odd to read his lines on the page following Joseph Needham's letter about the treatment of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. He can also attack the producers of *The Deer Hunter* for failing to represent the film's three working-class American protagonists as genocidal blood-beasts and their Viet Cong captors as Arthurian knights errant. He is not free, however, to draw me into his febrile embrace and carry me with him into the Reichenbach Falls of his ravings.

Finally, Sir, can I express my astonishment that you – having read my regular contributions to the NS over the past dozen years and no doubt having perused my weekly film column in the *Observer* from time to time – could have believed me capable of writing anything that would have justified Mr Woddis's reckless speculations.

PHILIP FRENCH

62 Dartmouth Park Road  
London NW5.

## Hong Kong by rote

Sir, Mr D. C. Bray wants us to believe that the Hong Kong education system is 'among the best in Asia' because there is free junior secondary education (Letters 16 February and 2 March). What he does not mention is the sordid nature of this free education.

Over 98 per cent of the half million or so secondary school students in Hong Kong are ethnic Chinese, but only 70,000 of them are in schools where the medium of instruction is Chinese. The rest are sent to schools where all subjects are taught in English – apart from Chinese language (taught as a 'secondary language' to children whose mother tongue it is) and Chinese history. Thus most school leavers are semi-literate in Chinese and can only make themselves understood by mingling English words in their conversation. Education to them is deculturation.

The standard of English tuition in Hong Kong is so low that most students can barely understand the English textbooks from which they are supposed to learn their civics, geography, physics, etc. And it is way beyond their linguistic ability to reason and argue in English. They usually resort to learning by rote, and it is not uncommon to find half of the scripts in an examination identical in wording – to

an English text, but not necessarily the one that fits the particular examination question. There is no place for the development of the mind in the Hong Kong education system.

The mass production of deculturised, unthinking school leavers is fine for the Hong Kong Government which wants a submissive labour force that can understand the basic English and Chinese of the workshop manual. But Hong Kong will, in 1997 if not earlier, be returned to China. The deculturised Hong Kong Chinese, finding his transition to be a full citizen of China made more difficult by the education he has received, will surely curse the day when he 'benefited' from the free education of the irresponsible Hong Kong Government.

K. C. CHAN

Junior Research Fellow  
in Chinese Studies

Wolfson College  
Oxford

## Non omnia possumus omnes

Sir, Perhaps Mr Smiley, when he writes in pained tones of the use of ungrammatical Latin (Letters 23 February), might like to ponder the possibility of there being more than one regular reader of the *NEW STATESMAN* who has no knowledge of that language. He may consider such people deprived, but I think they can reasonably expect to find English in an English publication. An unfamiliar English word can, after all, be looked up with relative ease, but an incomprehensible phrase in any foreign language might take ages to track down for the uninitiated and could seriously jeopardise the reader's chances of understanding a large chunk of the article.

Certainly use quotations from non-English sources (in the original if this is thought necessary) but with translations and source references. Where these two are missing I can only suspect the writer of an elitism which some of us are hoping the NS might help to eradicate.

COLIN TUCKER

204 Upper Clapton Road  
Hackney, London E5

*Point taken – and, to prove it, let us hastily add that the quotation above this letter is taken from Virgil's Eclogues and means, more or less, 'we can't all be good at everything', a sentiment with which Mr Tucker would doubtless concur.*

## Unhappy Tamils

Sir, The letter from the High Commissioner for Ceylon (NS 9 February) invites some comment. In particular, the reference to the condition of the plantation workers is both inaccurate and misleading. The plantation workers have lived in Ceylon for generations. All able bodies from the adult male to the teenage girl had to work in the plantations to eke out an existence. They enjoyed full rights of citizenship until independence. In 1948, they were stripped of their citizenship by the party in power, and were declared 'homeless'. Their labour formed the backbone for the signal cash crop economy of Ceylon.

For the next 25 years the two major Sinhala parties were vying with each other with their proposals for repatriating these Tamil workers to India. Meanwhile, plantation workers were paid very low wages; the common educational and health facilities were denied to them; they were deprived of the benefit of citizenship. Indeed, as Mr Christopher Hitchens pointed out (NS 19 January), their condition was not very different from that of serfs.

In the early seventies agreement was reached between the Indian and Ceylonese governments, under which some of the plantation workers were allowed to become citizens while the bulk of them were to be repatriated to India. Experiencing daily harassment, some Tamils are now willing to take advantage of this agreement and go to India. Others have moved into refugee camps and are being resettled in the traditional Tamil areas.

The High Commissioner of Ceylon claims that plantation workers enjoy full franchise. If this claim is true it is not strange that 15 per cent of the population elects only one member in a Parliament of 165. This solitary member has recently accepted office and crossed over to the government. To suggest that the plantation Tamils are happy because of the presence of this member in Cabinet is like the drunkard using the lamp-post not for light but for support.

R. NITHTHYANANTHAN

179 Norval Road  
North Wembley, Middlesex

## Solidarity punctured

Sir, Patrick Wintour's article on 'The TUC's foreign policy' (NS 2 March) was a good, gutsy lunge at what is undoubtedly the dark side of our trade union movement. For years the labour press has conspicuously failed to question who benefits from our union internationalism.

There are now some hopeful signs: after I wrote *Where Were You Brother?* some trade unionists told me they were determined to get resolutions through to the TUC demanding they answer the charges in the book. If more do so, or simply demand that the TUC and ICFTU provide regular information about benefits from their cash, then at least this year's TUC international debate, unlike so many in the past, will begin to deal with some realities.

For the moment the need is to clear away some of the constraints that block even the chance for change. I suggest that trade union demands along the following lines might help.

A rank and file advisory committee should be created to monitor TUC and ICFTU overseas activities with full access given to all relevant information. No TUC international staff should be recruited from, or seconded to, the Foreign Office. The TUC should use some of the government cash given for its overseas work (currently amounting to £180,000 a year) to help stimulate workers' awareness about the need for international solidarity and to encourage international worker exchanges, perhaps in conjunction with the Workers Educational Association and others involved in shop steward training. The TUC ought to break off all links with ORIT, its Western hemisphere regional wing and a CIA creation.

Finally, in view of Patrick Wintour's rather oblique references to Tom Jackson, may I say that at a time when most members of the TUC's International Committee refused to meet with me he did so. He was both open and courteous.

DON THOMSON

67 Coleshill Flats  
Pimlico Road, SW1

Sir, Patrick Wintour's valuable discussion of the TUC's foreign policy really needs following up by trade union members. The TUC does not budget its seven departments separately, so the expenses of the International Department are nowhere separately recorded. However, international expenditure has clearly risen annually over a long period, and will rise further. As you reported, £450,000 was given to the ICFTU in 1977. Actually, the TUC is under-affiliated to that body, and must be under pressure to pay a more accurate levy, which would not be less than £600,000.

Should there not be an efficiency audit by the unions? An ad hoc committee could investigate the work of the International Department and report to the Congress on whether it gives value for money, and whether it adequately reflects the policies of British trade unionism. We calculate that a minimum of 34 per cent of last year's TUC income went into international relations in one way or another. Surely it is time for a proper discussion of this vast expenditure?

KEN COATES  
TONY TOPHAM

Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation  
Gamble Street, Nottingham

## LETTERS

### Who bounces the bouncers?

Sir, In the autumn of 1977 Henry Bowles, a customer at the Bell public house in London, was beaten unconscious by men employed as bouncers by the licensee. Henry died two weeks later, never regaining consciousness. In the spring of the same year a customer at Cindy's night club in St Helen's, Peter Stubbs, was kicked to death by three men also employed as bouncers. This case only came to light recently because a policeman who witnessed the murder was fined for neglecting his duties as, at the time, he thought that the three men were simply 'ejecting a customer from the premises'. The first case received some publicity only because Henry's family and friends were determined not to let the circumstances which led to his death occur again.

It is ironic that both young men died at the hands of men whose job it was to protect them from violence. As people from all sides of the entertainment business have testified, these are not isolated incidents. Bouncers are very often the sort of people who are attracted to the job by the cloak of respectability it lends to the use of violence. A senior prosecutor for the police in serious murder cases has commented that he has seen many similar cases and in his experience the majority of bouncers have criminal records and are undesirable characters.

Under present legislation the employment of bouncers is subject to no form of public control whatever. The situation gives no protection to the employers of these men or to the public, who may find that bouncers offer more danger than protection. In no other area of society can unqualified and unlicensed men legally be employed for the purpose of offering force to the general public.

We are writing to you on behalf of Henry's family and friends, who feel it is the duty of the local council (in London's case the GLC) to require the registration of staff employed for the control or ejection of members of the public. This registration should only be issued on the grounds that the person has no violent criminal convictions and can give the name of a professional person who can testify as to their good character. It is our belief that this precaution will, to some extent, safeguard both the employers of bouncers and the public. Copies of a petition to this effect can be obtained from the address below.

MATTHEW BOWLES  
and six others

33 Montague Road  
Cambridge

### The television minefield

Sir, Our series *Disappearing World* is suffering some bruising in the union crewing punch-up that started with Jeremy Bugler's article in the Edinburgh Festival Programme 1978, was taken up in Edinburgh, and continued in your letters column (NS 2 March).

I was one who backed the series on the energy and idealism of one man, Brian Moser. His interest in the developing problem of primitive tribes was shown in an amateur film he made while still a geologist. On the strength of that film Brian learnt his craft on Granada local programmes and on some singularly hairy *World In Actions* before he was given charge of *Disappearing World*. He is one of those producer/directors who gives all his energies to the single-minded pursuit of an honest and effective portrait of the people he films. He believes that the integrity of his films can often only be achieved with small units of two or three people who share his idealism, are temperamentally suited to long periods of primitive living and can gain the confidence of the people they film.

He and his fellow producers on *Disappearing World* worked under these rules with considerable freedom for a number of years. Latterly, Brian Moser's style of film-making became unfashionable with some union colleagues. They felt managements exploited his dedication. We were faced with claims from the ACTT Live Shop for a researcher and a production assistant on the crew; we were asked by

the ACTT Film Shop to give preference to staff people even though we felt some of the freelances who had worked on the programme were more suitable; and the ETU asked that electricians should handle any form of artificial light including sun guns. Each union argued a good case. We could not see the films being made effectively with six or eight people. It was not a financial decision. The greater the number the less likely we were to gain the confidence of the usually remote tribal societies we filmed.

Producers and directors who make this sort of film know they depend on minimum intrusion and a fast and dedicated crew. These are the programme makers frustrated by the managements' and unions' inability to find a way of restoring the flexibility that permitted some of the most memorable films on British television. We cannot agree to the unions' conditions and the unions feel unable to withdraw. But negotiations continue on other matters which may in the long run enable us to reopen talks on *Disappearing World*. It took us seven years to get the series started; we are patient, and determined.

DAVID FLOWRIGHT  
Granada Television Programme Controller  
36 Golden Square  
London W1

Sir, As a rank and file member of ACTT I endorse Jeremy Bugler's view that British Television – that is, ITV – faces an eventual crisis. In an industry where the climate is decidedly cold, where equipment, minds and particularly salaries are 'frozen' and only the reflected heat from profits staves off frostbite, crisis is inevitable.

I sympathise with Bugler when he says that foreign trips are valued only for the 'booty' which they produce and that the actual purpose of the assignment is forgotten; this is particularly unfortunate with assignments as valuable as the examples cited. Regrettably the 'booty' is seen by those who manage to grab it as the only way of boosting their declining 'real incomes' – self and families first, South Africa *et al* second. Certainly not an example of left-wing attitudes, but understandable in the face of union inability or reluctance to negotiate sensible working practices with reactionary managements.

Finally, yes – 'publishing TV would be the best thing to happen in years'. Drastic slimming of the 'fat boy' that is ITV is long overdue if we are to recover our standards. I'm not the only 'free spirit' within ACTT who will not be taking 'massive industrial action' in support of any Sapper/Thatcher/ITV2 alliance. Considering the contempt with which ITV1 treats both its workforce and its viewers, who wants more? Surely the writing is on the Fleet Street wall?

PAUL THOMPSON  
Senior Cameraman  
Yorkshire Television

### Times past

Sir, Perhaps I might be permitted to add a footnote to Badalia Herodsfoot's piece about the planned Beaverbrook/Harmsworth merger in 1971 (NS 16 February). The motivation for all the work which was put into the scheme – with the full blessing of the then Lord Rothermere and Sir Max Aitken – was simply a belief that no business operation with public shareholders has a divine right to maintain loss-making operations indefinitely. Just why newspapers should be exempt from this elementary truth is a mystery guarded only by those whose apparent aim is to indulge themselves or their egos at someone else's expense, as Roy Thomson pointed out years ago. In this case the top union leaders at the time were smarter than management. They were privately consulted and gave their blessing to a scheme which had to be in the long-term interests of their members.

The 'disgruntled executives' were another matter. Their business judgement should be weighed against what has happened since. From time to time

many have been attracted by the idea of launching a new publication simply because in-house printing capacity is lying idle. They all forgot the predictable fate of the *Daily Mirror* colour magazine, which stood no chance of success without killing off a number of IPC magazines. We shall never know the truth of the matter, but I imagine that the combined trading losses of the three national newspapers principally concerned and their London evening stable-mates may currently be running at a rate in excess of £20 millions annually.

There is a good deal of waffle about the danger to democracy if readers are further restricted in their choice of newspapers. It is a question of degree. We are nowhere near in sight of the situation. Few would deny that the *Sunday Telegraph* and *The Observer* from different ends of the political spectrum satisfy most former *Sunday Times* readers – and save them £11.44 a year in the process. The idea that a monopoly London evening would be unable to cater for all the readers of the two existing titles is nonsense. For a start, nine-tenths of their content is identical, from classified advertising through stock exchange prices to the TV programmes. Professional editing and editorialising could do the rest. Meanwhile both are moving into the same slot in the market to the point where – to the credit of the *Evening News* – they are getting hard to tell apart.

JOHN COOTE

47 Caversham Street  
London SW3

### The BBC and Iran

Sir, I hate to spoil Christopher Hitchens's story for him ('How they tried to bend the BBC', NS 2 March), but the facts are quite shameful enough not to need imaginative embellishments. He is quite right about the activities of what he describes as the 'clubland heroes' and of those who lobbied the BBC less publicly on behalf of the Shah. But in spite of my efforts to clarify for him the truth about the so-called 'inflammatory' interview with the Ayatollah Khomeini he has got into a hopeless muddle. No-one – neither Sir Michael Palliser nor anyone else – tried to interfere with this broadcast, which in any case was not 'inflammatory' but informative. Nor is it true to say, as I tried to make clear to Christopher Hitchens, that the Foreign Office sought to 'edit' the news coverage of the External Services of Iran. It did not. On the contrary, as I said to him at least twice and much as it might surprise him, the FCO behaved quite impeccably.

GERARD MANSELL  
Deputy Director-General and  
Managing Director, External  
Broadcasting

BBC

Christopher Hitchens replies: Mr Mansell does his duty very fairly. But he knows quite well what he cannot publicly admit – that my sources for that article were, without exception, people employed by the BBC both at home and in the field. The fact that they do not wish to be quoted by name is understandable, but he and I both know who they are. The FCO did not behave impeccably; their conduct in this matter was of a piece with the general disgrace of their Iranian policy. (The word 'inflammatory' for instance, was their word not mine). The BBC *did* behave very well in resisting their 'suggestions' and perhaps what Mr Mansell means is that it would take more than a panicky Sir Michael Palliser to count as 'pressure'. Long may this view continue to flourish.

### BINDERS

If you wish to keep your NEW STATESMAN in good condition you should have a binder. It holds a half-year's copies and costs only £3 (£5 for two). Please send remittance to Eve Suckling, New Statesman, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1.

I do not wish to upset anybody in any way whatsoever, and a miracle cure for some distressing physical disability is still a blessed miracle cure, whether it be self-induced, which is what I suspect, or supernatural, but nevertheless I have seldom been able to forget the fact that the hallowed town of Lourdes, for those with that smattering of frog that permits a fluent translation, becomes in English a name that means 'heavy ladies'. Possibly this concept has never occurred to you but it is. I regret to say, with such trivia that my mind is cluttered, leaving little or no room at all for fresh and more productive thoughts. Some years ago when I was a schoolmaster and was busily devoting my spare-time energies to devising short imitations based on the schoolmistresses of Miss Angela Brazil, imitations which I subsequently performed upon the wireless, a parent came to see me about his son's future prospects in the academic field. At one point the father, who evidently owned a radio set, gazed at me nonplussed and said, perhaps a trifle heavily: 'It must be rather difficult to show them the man behind the clown.' He was, very kindly, suspecting me of possessing hidden depths.

It is when it comes to confessions about reading and other such pleasures that my shallow nature is really revealed and I am immediately in very bad trouble intellectually. Pray prepare yourself for some philistine failings. Though I see the point of Proust, I would cheerfully swap the entire canon for a book, any book, by P. G. Wodehouse. The very name of Virginia Woolf now brings me out in a nervous rash and my eyelids start to twitch (a sure sign of stressful agitation). Give me instead the more robust, warmer, funnier and infinitely more readable novels of Stella Gibbons – those people who misguidedly imagine that she began and ended with the triumphant *Cold Comfort Farm* have many happy surprises in store. Well then, I have never been able to understand the tremendous fuss that is made of E. M. Forster and, see how far gone I am, I put Dickens, sloop and all, way above everybody else. I would sooner see *Oklahoma!* than *Hamlet*. When I find myself by mistake face to face with a Hepworth sculpture, I look keenly about for sticks of dynamite. My favourite film, even including *Citizen Kane*, is that work of genius *Some Like It Hot*. There now! Hurl your mental brickbats by all means, but please don't write.

I do sometimes, if a little feebly, try to widen my horizons and the other day I listened to some very modern music. To put it like that, however, implies an actual intention to listen. To be honest, what in point of fact happened was that I was listening happily on dear old Radio 3 to some Brahms which, in due course, gave way to a much more recent composer and, with my mind elsewhere and therefore taken entirely by surprise, I omitted to dart to the machine and hastily switch it off. The music was all as modern as modern can be (was it perhaps one of those scores written, I am given to understand, on a circular sheet of paper so that its interpreter can start wherever it seems best?). Much of it was made up of silences so complete and prolonged that I feared that my batteries had collapsed. Then

there suddenly came what I can only describe as a sort of disturbance in the woodwind, a sound not totally unlike that from a stomach-rumble, a field in which I am something of a specialist and I had no hesitation in this case in diagnosing it as a gooseberry rumble, this delicious fruit producing, if not caught at the very apogee of ripeness, muffled noises of a very distinctive nature, not as strident as a rollmops rumble but with something of its resonance. Then, after more silences, there was a noise as though several music stands had fallen over. Perhaps they had.

Modern music is, I dare say, what used to be called, and perhaps still is, 'an acquired taste'. These words were often on my father's lips when he kindly tried to interest me, but at too early an age, in those two palate-teasers, mustard and what was apparently a species of black grit that fell from the bottom of a pepper-mill when gyrated. But other allegedly acquired tastes I immediately acquired without the smallest trouble. The first olive I ever ate, one of those large black ones that should be such a prominent feature of a Salade Niçoise, seemed to me delightful beyond words and I at once moved on to green ones, both with stones and without. The first oyster that ever came my way was at Rules in London's Maiden Lane, a restaurant made even more romantic to me by the knowledge that not only had it sheltered the then Prince of Wales (let in, it was said, by a private staircase) when giving supper to Gertrude Lawrence, lucky him, but also was a stone's, or pancake's, throw from the Adelphi

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## Roger Woddis Band of Brothers

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*The Joe Loss orchestra played Western dance-music on arriving in China. The Chinese responded with a musical item called 'Busy Sending Grain by Horse-cart'.*

Busy sending grain by horsecart,  
Chiang Ching now no longer boss;  
As we say to Eric Varley,  
China's gain is your Joe Loss.

More than two-way trade in textiles,  
More than diesel trains or food,  
Sino-British understanding  
Comes from being in the mood.

Now we welcome Western music,  
Goodbye to the Gang of Four;  
Giant leaps towards the future  
Start with one step on the floor.

Disco hits mean more than opera,  
Culture is a film called 'Grease';  
Long live Newton-John-Travolta,  
Bringing harmony and peace!

Busy sending grain by horsecart,  
Time enough to strike a gong  
When we seal the bonds of friendship  
With a Eurovision song.

Theatre's stage door where a maniac had once lurked and murdered a handsome actor called William Terriss. As to the oysters, I have ever since envied walruses and carpenters not to speak of East End dwellers of the Nineties whose normal daily diet included a number of these tasty bivalves, washed down with gin, a beverage wisely kept at a price within the reach of all and forming a useful numbing agent for the undoubted horrors of their lives. The first *bouchée* of caviare was mine in 1934 and in a small Monte Carlo buvette owned by a wildly Anglo-phil frog who, by way of encouraging customers at the cocktail hour to call for and indulge in the bubbly queen of drinks, put up a notice which read SAY ALOUD CHAMPAGNE COCK and, possessed of a pleasing tenor voice of a vaguely Tauberish kind, paraded the tables treating us empire builders to the Indian Love Lyrics in very nearly accurate English ('Pale hands I loved besides the Shalimar').

In case I should by now be cutting an objectionable mental figure as a glutton, I must confess that there are two edibles for which I have never acquired any feelings but revulsion. Both of them belong, and in the fullest sense, to the vegetable kingdom and the first of them is lentils. I am not speaking of lentil soup, of which by the time you have put in the stock, onions, carrots, turnips, dripping, potatoes, herbs and cream, the least important ingredient (take away the number you first thought of) is lentils. I speak of lentils *nature*, plain and untampered with and as they left their Maker. Lentils are seeds, as I hardly need to remind you, of a papilionaceous plant belonging to the Leguminosae family and, a first cousin to gorse, formed an important and daily part of our lunches at the splendid Froebel Institute kindergarten in the Hammersmith area and during the latter years of the first world war when the submarine menace was at its height. Even at home, lentils had to figure from time to time on our menus, so that on some days I had them twice. Dislike was mutual, the lentils fighting back with indigestion.

The combination of the foreign words 'kindergarten' and 'Froebel' convinced one of my school friends that all the schoolmistresses were German spies but I was already enjoying the game of 'L'Attaque' and knew perfectly well what a spy looked like (a black-suited male wearing a large and broadbrimmed hat and imperfectly concealed behind a tree). Rightly informed by those in authority that our food, lentils especially, came to us, very bravely brought, over the seas, we sang every morning the same hymn 'Eternal Father Strong to Save' and intended to help those in peril on the sea. One sang as loudly as possible, feeling that it might help more towards the safety of the vital cargoes. And before my eyes there rose a vision of decks piled high with lentils and holds stuffed with the nutritious seeds of that plant I mentioned. Even liners' cabins I suspected of being crammed with the stuff. Had the *Lusitania* perhaps sunk so sadly and so speedily because of lentils? For some time (I was quite young) I associated almost everything that floated with lentils. When we came, in the poetry class, to Masfield. I felt certain that, sandwiched in between the ivory, apes, peacocks, coal and pig-lead, were sack upon sack of lentils. How else to explain their unwelcome proliferation?

And the other vegetable is parsnips for which I have, in two senses, no time.

# BOOKS IN GENERAL

Jeremy Treglown

## The Hungry Young Man

**Bertolt Brecht: Diaries 1920-1922** translated by John Willett *Eyre Methuen* £6.50

**Towards Utopia: A Study of Brecht** by KEITH A. DICKSON *Oxford* £10

**Brecht: a Biography** by KLAUS VÖLKER translated by John Nowell *Marion Boyars* £12

'At this very moment,' John Nowell translates Brecht as having said some time in 1926,

having given these babies the cannon-balls, with which we were received, to play football with, one of these quiet little ones is slipping off, when our eyes are turned, to play once more in the rectum of his late grandpapa!!

Like many, perhaps most, of Brecht's English admirers, I have little German, so am almost as chuffed as irritated to have found that Völker's biography, first published in Germany in 1976, is quite often easier to understand in the original than in the translation. The particular context is Brecht's reaction to two articles by Thomas Mann and his son Klaus, about current young writers and their relation to the great authors of their fathers' generation. Mann *père* deprecates the sickly aimlessness of the young by comparison with giants like Tolstoy; Mann *fil*s dissociates himself from such young bloods as there were around at the time, and obsequiously joins his father in praise of older men. Brecht, himself a father, satirically takes up the generation game and wonders how the young Mann's own children will react to their grandfather, whose work Brecht disliked. A quick check of Völker's original unsurprisingly reveals that Nowell's rendering has the kind of pocket-dictionary fidelity that is seen too in his exact reproduction of Brecht's punctuation, so inept in the English version. And 'Play once more in the rectum of his late grandpapa', a word-for-word shot at '*spielt wieder in Mastdarm des seliger Opapa*', is not an allusion to acts of incestuous juvenile homosexual necrophilia, but in context means something like 'shoot [the cannon-ball] back up his arse'.

The fears and miseries of bad translation are crucial with Brecht for many reasons, not least that the obvious solution (learn German and read him and his critics in the original) is no longer necessarily the right one for British audiences. For many of our younger generation of established dramatists – Bond, Brenton, Hare – Brecht is what Shakespeare was to the German Romantics, or for that matter what Seneca was to the Elizabethans. An influential English author, Brecht needs to be readable in our own language, as Seneca was in Heywood's translation, or as Schlegel made Shakespeare for the Germans. Of course, his very influence makes the point seem superfluous. How did he get to be so important, if he's unreadable? The first answer is, in good productions: the Berliner Ensemble's visits to Paris in 1954 and 1955, and to London in 1956, made his name here (with Tynan's help) in a way that the surprisingly numerous earlier productions of his work in Britain, and his own visits to London in 1934 and 1936, never

did. There's his theory, too. Schlegel invented a theory of Shakespeare; by doing the job for himself, Brecht made his work easier to follow, if not necessarily to imitate.

Indeed, unlike the German Shakespeare, the English Brecht is more followed than enjoyed. Whatever his influence on writers and theatre-groups since 1956, his plays have had little commercial success here. The shows that do best are the musical collaborations with Kurt Weill – *The Threepenny Opera*, in particular, and recently *Happy End* (neglected by most of his critics, including Keith Dickson). Other successes, like Leonard Rosseter's *Arturo Ui*, have to be put down undemocratically to a star performance. These are facts capable of more than one explanation, but the lack of any really strong translations is certainly a factor. Brecht's reputation in Germany depends to an extent still little understood in Britain on his qualities as a poet. But no English poet of any importance has tackled the plays. Auden appears here and there as a minor collaborator, but he never became as involved as Spender did with Büchner's *Danton's Death*, or as Randall Jarrell did with Goethe.

Judged simply from the standpoint of English readability, John Willett is one of Brecht's best translators, as well as being a leading critical and editorial authority on his work, and his impeccably annotated version of the diaries of 1920-22 is lucid and alert. But the diaries themselves make the language gap in relation to Brecht's whole output even more tantalising. They are full of his enjoyment of words. He says he has been fishing them 'in shoals' out of Paul Wiegler's *Figuren*; is worried about his lack of them, especially of verbs; and talks about them as if they have an independent life. 'I mixed up and put together words like strong drinks', he writes somewhere else (though where it's hard to discover, because Völker's book, both in German and in English, prints its references unusably at the back without keying them to page-numbers, let alone to the passages themselves – an odd procedure in a work which uses 'a wealth of hitherto unpublished material'); 'whole scenes in words of specific texture and colour such as would appeal to the senses. Cherrystone, revolver, trouser-pocket, paper-god – mixtures of that sort.'

Verbal impressionism of this kind is anyway untranslatable in an absolute sense, of course. But what does come across in the diaries is the inquisitive experimental energy behind it. They are the only purely autobiographical notes he ever kept, and belong to the period which includes his most subjective work. He was in his early twenties, had written the first version of the part-autobiographical *Baal* and a number of good poems, was preparing *Galgei* (a trial run of *Man is Man*) and got the idea for *In the Jungle of the Cities*. One of the pleasures of reading them, inevitably, is the simple interest of when and how ideas began. One Sunday in 1921, for instance, he has been

reading Kipling, whom he loved. It suddenly occurs to him that 'nobody has yet described the big city as a jungle', and he's off. There are the anticipations of the later political ideology and dramatic theory, too – the recognition that 'politics is too interesting to serve as props', for example, as he works on a play about the Old Testament David; or his distrust, already, of narrative tension and the interest of plots.

It's the sheer fertility of his mind that is most impressive, though: the number of projects for plays, poems and films, most of them coming to nothing; the range of his reading and the vivacity of his ideas – so many ideas that he keeps forgetting them, he says, and justifies it by dismissing ideologues like Goethe and Hebbel as intellectual tram-conductors, always aware of when their passengers got on the bus and where they are going. The metaphor itself is an indication of the exuberant concreteness of his imagination. Every notion is anthropomorphised – words can be 'greedy, vain, crafty, pig-headed or vulgar. One should start up a Salvation Army to "save" them, they are so degenerate'; his old ideas are in danger of becoming 'arrogant cripples'. In this welfare state of mind, with its verbal no-goods and ideological stretch-cases clamouring for care, the most important inhabitants are babies. The prolific Brecht, already the father not only of so much writing but of a son, Frank, by the gorgeous 'Bi' Banholzer (the book's photographs are extremely good), is intensely occupied by the relationship between parenthood and art. His new girl friend, Marianne Zoff, becomes pregnant by him while trying to split up with her previous man, who beats her up a lot both before and during the pregnancy. Brecht is keen to have more children – 'Let them grow, these little Brechts,' he writes in a letter to another girl friend Dora Mannheim – but Mar, afraid that her progress as an opera-singer will be impeded ('hypnotised by her brilliant career like a chicken by a chalk line', he complains), wants an abortion. Art and having children are mutually dependent, he argues: 'You should be able to rise to the top with two children. Why rate yourself so low? . . . To get satisfaction out of art you need to make art with your body and soul'; and when she loses the child he temporarily rejects her in a chilly rage.

Mar became his first wife and he had a daughter by her, while staying impressively polygamous all his life. During this early crisis he was still seeing Bi frequently, and made a hilariously tentative attempt to let her know about the other girl: 'I told her I had kissed Mar two or three times in the Siebentschwald one evening: that's as far as I dared go, since she went absolutely white.' Frank was being looked after by a local family and the question of who was to bring him up is another concern – one that was to have its own offspring much later, in 1945, in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, where Brecht's discussion of the rights of ownership is focused on a dispute over a child: 'what there is', the play movingly decides, 'belongs to those who are good for it'. Brecht and the boy were both prodigal: 'He hardly says anything, but he plays in an original way . . . and gives away everything he gets to all and sundry . . . I lent him my hat, then my tie, my watch, ten pfennigs.' And if Brecht's parental warmth and his sexuality suggest the human energy of his developing art, his rejection of bourgeois dramatic forms is connected

with his scorn of conventional domesticity:

There are piles of dead houses, so many piles of stone with holes where lights are lit in the evening and parcels of flesh walk about beneath roofs designed to keep out the rains of heaven and the endlessness of the star-covered sky, sheltered from all this and the wind too, and at night the parcels lie stiffly among the sheets and pillows.

One of Brecht's ways of offending the middle-class audiences was his plagiarism – what he called, while defending *The Three-penny Opera* against charges not only about its debt to *The Beggar's Opera* but about its containing 25 lines of K. L. Ammer's translation of Villon, his 'fundamental laxity in matters of intellectual property'. Keith Dickson discusses this subject in his readable study, though not as inventively as it seems to demand. You can't miss the fact that Brecht, like Shakespeare, ransacked earlier drama, literature and history for his plays. His best-known work includes adaptations of Shakespeare (*Coriolanus*) and Synge (*Mother Courage* takes off from *Riders to the Sea*), of biblical stories (*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*), of biography (*Galileo*) and of novels, one of which he adapted as *Schweyk*, to the indignation of Piscator, who didn't share his relaxed view of artistic ownership. What Dickson doesn't convey is how traditional a feature of the popular theatre plagiarism has always been. Radical adaptations of earlier works, especially Shakespeare's, have been and still are the norm rather than the exception, and if Brecht didn't know that scenes from Shakespeare's plays were turned, for example, into 19th-century circus acts, he might have guessed as much.

Dickson doesn't give much impression, either, of the carnivorous, double-helping gluttony with which Brecht heaped his artistic plate with anything he liked. The diaries are the hungriest book I've read. He couldn't glance at a book or visit a music-hall without planning how he might use it: 'I went with Brüstle and saw an eccentric clown of immense stature who shot at the lights with a little pistol, banged himself on the head, developed a large bump, sawed it off and ate it

... Once I get my hooks on a theatre I shall hire 2 clowns'. Life, too, even at its most unwieldy, is sized up for copy. 'If one wanted to convey the Marianne business', he writes calculatingly, twelve days after she loses the child, 'the thing that would need the most careful attention would be the unusual coloration of the setting. Here you have a woman who ...'

It's a fascinating document, of the kind Brecht himself liked to read: he was irritated by historians who told him nothing about personalities and physicalities. Klaus Völker is a writer of this abstract kind, resolutely uninterested in the psychology or individual circumstances of his subject. Concerned as he seems to be to depersonalise authorship – an aim with a respectable intellectual basis, but one difficult to reconcile with the conventional life-and-works kind of book this actually is – he presents Brecht as a featureless nexus of accidents. Plays suddenly turn out to have been written, characterless women appear and disappear half-unnoticed, events don't so much happen as get happened. So, for example, the day after the burning of the Reichstag, Brecht leaves a hospital in Berlin where he's been having an operation (what kind of operation?) and goes straight to Prague with Helene Weigel, without returning to his apartment. How the journey was planned, whether it was Weigel's initiative, whether she was able to pack up any of his valued books or a box or two of cigars at least, whether the trip was hurried or not, frightening or not, we aren't told.

There are things to be learned, though, and Völker gets more into his 400 or so pages than Frederic Ewen did into the 550 of his very similar volume in 1976. Völker is interesting on some details – Brecht's well-known passion for boxing, for example, or the fact that the place where he first saw Hitler perform in 1923 was a circus, Krone's in Munich: the fact – though not Brecht's reaction: with memorable snobbery he said afterwards that Hitler clearly knew the theatre only from the gallery – is unfamiliar. Again, we hear more from Völker than from Ewen about Brecht's bisex-

uality, though the subject is encrusted in periphrases: we're told, for example, that he 'took a delight in dandified men of the Oscar Wilde and Rimbaud type' (ah, so! the rascal) – a reference that gets Wilde a place in the index – and later that Brecht's invented town Mahagonny 'expressed the discrepant fascination exercised over him by the male eccentrics he had met in the suburban taverns'.

Keith Dickson's critical study, by contrast, written in intelligible English and giving quotations in the original, with appended translations, is readable, scholarly and extremely useful. Where Völker and Ewen offer a biographico-descriptive chronological trot through the works, Dickson discusses them under intellectual headings derived from Marxist theory: their account of history (*Galileo*, *Mother Courage* and so on, each related very fully to the historical knowledge available to Brecht, and to other writers' treatment of it), their exposure of the social 'superstructure' in their analysis of religion, law, political ideology (here always fascism) and of literature; and the pursuit of form. He offers some valuable brief chapters on the prose fictions and poems, brings some neglected plays to attention, and is knowledgeable about Brecht's performance-history, both in Germany and abroad, as well as about his background and ideas. There are more challenging critics of Brecht, but I don't know of a study which is both so accessible and so thoroughly informative about his teeming art.

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Hugh Brogan

## Search and Destroy

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America in Vietnam by GUENTER LEWY  
Oxford £9.50

This is a valuable, scholarly contribution to history, based largely on American military archives not previously exploited, and which gains authenticity from being written in Pentagonese (never use words where initials are available). It is, above all, an attempt to learn the lessons of the past, and as such may be recommended to Deng Xiaoping: it may keep him sober. It is also a welcome proof of the value of open government. A similar study (say, of the Rhodesian imbroglio), based on such sensitive sources, could not possibly be published here; so our rulers will go on making the same old blunders. At least the Americans give themselves the chance of profiting from their mistakes.

According to Professor Lewy, everyone now agrees that the American intervention in Vietnam was a miscalculation, except the US military leadership, which still thinks that if only it had been given a freer hand – more bombs, more money, more men – it could have won. Otherwise, it is accepted that America could have won only if the international situation permitted it; if a viable South Vietnamese government had emerged; and if the appropriate military techniques had been mastered. In my opinion, none of these conditions could ever have been realised.

## Carlos Fuentes THE HYDRA HEAD

"After the baroque complexity of **Terra Nostra**, Fuentes explores new territory. This is a spy thriller...but coming from Fuentes, it is, of course, much more: among other things, a study of the nature of political violence, and a subtly drawn profile of Mexico itself."

The Bookseller  
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Warburg

Professor Lewy is not so absolute. He is not one of the anti-war publicists who were once so vocal; on the contrary, he devotes a great deal of space to refuting their wilder assertions. He exposes the Bertrand Russell 'tribunal', for instance, as a thoroughly mischievous and incompetent body, and he proves that the Vietnamese communists were guilty of far more and far worse war crimes than the Americans. This will win him few friends on the Left. But he may well throw the Right into convulsions. For with impeccable learning, logic and restraint he details the facts which together make up the immense disgrace of America's war in Vietnam.

Far from being masters of the techniques of counter-insurgency, the US forces wilfully ignored them. The celebrated Green Berets were never given a chance. Instead, William Westmoreland, the worst American general since John Pope, wasted his forces on search-and-destroy missions in the jungle. This suited the communists wonderfully, for they knew, and never forgot, that the war would be won or lost in the densely populated areas. Consequently, they were happy to build up their guerrilla networks among the paddy-fields while the Americans blundered about up-country, 'zapping the Cong', enduring heavy losses of men and materials, and alienating the people they were supposed to be helping – the despised 'gooks' – by their free-fire zones, their forced resettlements, and by their massively destructive weaponry. Even when it dawned on the high command that the strategy was all wrong, it proved impossible to redesign effectively.

Westmoreland's replacement, Creighton Abrams, laid down rational rules, but his subordinates all too often ignored them. As one of them remarked: 'I'll be damned if I permit the United States Army, its institutions, its doctrine, and its traditions to be destroyed just to win this lousy war.' Given such a recalcitrant instrument, it is not surprising that the Nixon Administration felt obliged to withdraw. Yet withdrawal amounted to a confession that all the sacrifices of 1965-69 (during the Johnson years 222,351 US servicemen were killed or wounded) had been in vain. No wonder the war grew more and more unpopular, until in 1973 Congress cut off all military aid to South Vietnam. This cleared the way for a communist victory, and the last phase saw the betrayal of all those Vietnamese who had trusted Uncle Sam, many of them were crooks, no doubt, but most were not.

Another reason for keeping out in the first place was the fragility of the Republic of Vietnam. America's genius for backing losers such as Chiang Kai-Shek and the Shah of Iran was never more conspicuous than in its relations with Ngo Dinh Diem and Nguyen Van Thieu. Professor Lewy comes nearest to

weakening my convictions when he demonstrates that in the early Seventies the South Vietnamese state had made significant social and political progress; but it never looked like rivaling the discipline and organisation of the communists; corruption was never really overcome. Washington clung to the delusion that the Vietnamese war was a simple case of democratic resistance to external aggression; the reality was far more complex, too complex to benefit from US interference.

Finally, there was the fact that international conditions did not favour the enterprise. Professor Lewy doubts that even an invasion of the North could have seriously altered the military outcome; but in any case the US did not dare attempt it. The lesson of Korea was unambiguous: war with China was folly, and there were limits to Chinese patience. So North Vietnam continued as a sanctuary for the communists, and all the bombs rained down on them did not prevent the comparatively low level of supply (100 tons a day) that their forces in the South required.

Professor Lewy's critique is the more devastating because he never raises his voice. For example, after discussing the My Lai massacre, he comes to the conclusion that Westmoreland should have been tried for dereliction of duty 'or perhaps even criminal negligence'. It does not sound much, but a moment's thought will show what a shattering event Westmoreland's court-martial, on any charges, would have been, and how culpable was the failure to try him.

The book is not without its blemishes. The most puzzling is the almost complete omission of any discussion of the attack on Cambodia, perhaps the biggest single crime of the war. Nor does the author examine the point, so obvious to Europeans, that the Second Indo-Chinese War was, like the first, a colonialist enterprise: a ludicrous struggle against some of the strongest forces of our time. Professor Lewy's preoccupation with legality is also unfortunate, seemingly blinding him to the most important issue of all. Even if every action taken by the US in Vietnam was legal, the whole undertaking, being unnecessary

(Professor Lewy is very good on the emptiness of official assertions that Vietnam was a vital interest of the free world), was shockingly wrong; a crime, because a sin; an affront against the laws of our common humanity, if not against international law as it stood in 1965. It is futile for Professor Lewy to try to rescue his country's credit by putting the American 'rules of engagement' into evidence: especially as those rules, though humane, were all too often flouted.

John Spurling

## Hell on Earth

**The Legacy of Mark Rothko** by LEE SELDES  
Secker £7.90

**Mark Rothko** by DIANE WALDMAN *Thames & Hudson* £18

Reviewing *Modern Art in the US* at the Tate in 1955, the NS's critic, John Berger, thought the paintings wicked, suicidal, the work of artists 'trapped within their own dead subjectivity'. The American critic Meyer Schapiro, however, saw a young painter rolling about in a frenzy of delight in front of the huge Pollocks and Rothkos. Rothko himself, claiming not to be an abstractionist at all, said:

I'm not interested in the relationship of colour or form or anything else. I'm interested only in expressing basic human emotions – tragedy, ecstasy, doom and so on... The people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them.

Robert Goldwater (the only critic Rothko had any time for) wrote of

the violence which the artist attributes to his own work and which to the observer, faced with the horizontal harmonies of these tremendous canvases, seems more closely akin to violent self-control.

### NEXT WEEK Spring Books

Jonathan Raban on Robert Lowell, Stephen Koss on Quentin Skinner, Christopher Hill on Milton, Malcolm Bradbury on Melville, Philip Mason on Hinduism, Arthur Marshall on A. L. Rowse, David Lodge on John Updike, Russell Davies on the Beats

## Anne Redmon author of *Emily Stone* MUSIC AND SILENCE

"No less confident, closely observed or mordantly funny... may be expected to give the Booker judges cause to ponder."

**The Bookseller**

"This author can write almost everyone else out of sight." *Janice Elliott, Sunday Telegraph*

**£4.95**

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Warburg

Rothko was a Faustian figure. Born in Latvia in 1903, he emigrated with his family to America ten years later, picked up English quickly enough to pass through high school in three years and won a scholarship to Yale. His father having died a year after their migration and the family being poor, Marcus Rothkowitz (as he then was) had to work for his living through both school and college. He was a socialist, a good debater and at one time hoped to be a trade union organiser. At Yale he intended to be an engineer, but he also helped to publish a weekly newspaper criticising the college. He was still passionate about politics, and his other chief interests were mathematics, literature, philosophy, music, theatre and Italian primitive art. Later, when he had abandoned Yale without taking a degree and moved to New York, cutting patterns for clothes to earn his keep, he did some acting (claiming that Clark Gable was once his understudy); and having at last, from all the options, chosen painting, he set his sights high, to emulate Mozart, Aeschylus, Shakespeare and the great artists of the Renaissance: 'I became a painter because I wanted to raise painting to the level of poignancy of music and poetry.'

Lee Seldes's court-room drama begins with the discovery of Rothko's corpse in his studio in 1970. His arms had been slashed inside the elbows with a razor-blade. The trial that followed four years later was not to discover who did it – though the painter Agnes Martin has said publicly that he couldn't have committed suicide, that 'he was done in, obviously' – but to determine whether or not Frank Lloyd and

his Marlborough Gallery had fairly acquired the 800 or so paintings in Rothko's estate.

Rothko had remained poor until the mid-Fifties: his total income in 1954, when he was sacked from his teaching post at Brooklyn College for refusing to take courses in advertising and textile design, was \$2,433. Then suddenly the combined effects of his and the other leading Abstract Expressionists' expanding reputations and the emergence of art as a new financial commodity sent his sales and his prices rocketing. By 1958, when he represented the US at the Venice Biennale, his paintings were fetching five figures. In 1970 Frank Lloyd sold one to the collector Paul Mellon for \$180,000, but that was after Rothko's death. Lloyd had bought it with 99 others from the Estate at an average \$18,000 apiece and he had actually paid only \$200,000 down for the whole lot, with the rest to follow in interest-free instalments over 12 years. As for the remaining 700-odd paintings, they were consigned by the Estate to Lloyd for the next 12 years, to be sold at his discretion, with a 50 per cent commission for the Gallery.

The Mephistopheles to Lloyd's Satan was an elderly accountant called Bernard Reis, who often accepted his clients' paintings in lieu of fees. Although the consistently high quality of Rothko's art never suffered during his 15 years of fame and fortune, he himself did. 'This painter of genius', writes Diane Waldman in her critical study, 'wanted to achieve the grandeur of tradition and at the same time to rebel against tradition. The struggle to attain this paradoxical goal ultimately destroyed his confidence.' Part of the trouble was that only six years after their reign over the New York art world began, the Abstract Expressionists were dethroned by Pop Art. It didn't affect their prices, but it damaged their sense of themselves and of the value of what they were doing. They had been the vanguard for nearly 20 years. 'When his work became a commodity,' said Rothko's friend James Brooks, 'he could no longer evaluate it; he did not know whether people were buying his paintings because they were good or because they were Rothkos.' In 1968 Rothko became seriously ill; his melancholia deepened; he was drinking heavily; he left his wife and two children. His prop and stay, in what seems to have been a kind of father-son relationship, was Bernard Reis.

Reis drew up Rothko's will, leaving \$250,000 to his wife but all the paintings to the Mark Rothko Foundation. Reis was one of the three executors (another was a Marlborough artist called Stamos) who also constituted, with three others, the board of the Foundation. Reis, already the Marlborough's accountant, became, five weeks after Rothko's death, its secretary-treasurer and one of its directors.

The suit against the Marlborough Gallery and the executors was brought by Rothko's daughter Kate – her mother had died soon after her father – in the belief that, whatever was left out of the will, Rothko had primarily intended his Foundation to keep the best paintings together and show them, not dispose of them piecemeal. The trial, in which New York's Assistant Attorney-General, Gustave Harrow, joined the plaintiffs on behalf of the public, exposed strand by strand the elaborate web of Lloyd's dealings through a complex of Liechtenstein-based companies, his scandalous profits on what he had bought cheaply from the tame executors of the Estate and the

many subterfuges he used to cover his tracks once the hunt was up. Lee Seldes's book – racy, but not offensively so – is a formidably researched and organised document as well as a first-rate read. It ends happily in so far as the villains are exposed and relieved of their loot, but it leaves Rothko where Berger saw him, in hell.

Diane Waldman's book redeems him. It is the lavishly illustrated catalogue to a Rothko retrospective which is currently touring America. Many of the paintings in the show – all 198 are given single-page reproductions and 96 are in colour – are the rescued ones and the acknowledgments at the front of the book are to the heroine and several of the heroes of the Seldes book: Kate and her husband, their leading advocate and the new board of the Foundation. Miss Waldman's text treats Rothko purely as a painter and a great one, not as the pitiable victim of his own weaknesses and others' greed. One of the more sickening aspects of the trial was the calling of expert witnesses to testify to Rothko's worldly value as a painter against the Marlborough's contention that it was their salesmanship which had bumped up his prices and lent him a spurious importance.

Crusty and suspicious of slights, Rothko once turned on a young admirer who had asked about his development: 'What development? I did not develop. You talk like a critic.' Miss Waldman charts his development steadily and learnedly and in doing so enormously extends one's understanding of the mature work. Spectacular as they are, the coloured reproductions can only act as mementoes of what that amounts to – a mysterious tension between sensuality and reticence, emotion and clarity, which Mark Rothko shares with certain other specially addictive painters, Van der Weyden, Piero, Giorgione, Vermeer, Mondrian.

## This English

This week we lead with three misplaced appositions: the meaning becomes clear in each case – but not before a grotesque fantasy of carnage and deracination has wriggled up in the reader's mind. (The second slip is compounded by a ridiculous near-homophone, the third by a yob's comma.) We follow with a misuse and what I take to be a desperate attempt at 'ephemera' (though it might be a new swear-word).

□ Even after raping a girl of 17, magistrates at St Albans released him. It was a typical example of how delinquents were made, said the judge. **Maureen Knight and Owen Summers** *Daily Express* (Robert Markham)

□ With moustache, paunch and spectacles slipping down a long nose, you could imagine him shuffling out of a back room to sell cigarettes in a dinghy shop. *Observer* (Dr G. L. Bickler)

□ The Corrigan brothers who make one of London's best-known pork sausages, are never short of customers even though they sell them at around 68p a lb. *Meat Trades Journal* (Paul Gorman)

□ 'It's ludicrous,' said Mr Norman Lambell, the leader of the DIY repair men. 'I am not going to be kow-towed by these mini-Hitlers.' *Guardian* (Alan Tobias)

□ WANTED pre-1960 London bus and tram maps, badges, pictures and efferama. **Small ad** *Daily Telegraph* (R. G. Hodgson)

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# 'Autobiographies' by Derek Mahon

## 1. The Home Front

While the frozen armies trembled  
At the gates of Stalingrad  
They took me home in a taxi  
And laid me in my cot,  
And there I slept again  
With siren and black-out;

And slept under the stairs  
Beside the gas meter,  
When bombs fell on the city;  
So I never saw the sky  
Fringed with a fiery glow,  
Searchlights roaming the stars.

But I do remember one time  
(I must have been four then)  
Being held up to the window  
For a victory parade –  
Soldiers, sailors and airmen  
Lining the Antrim Road;

And, later, hide-and-seek  
Among the air-raid shelters,  
The last ration coupons,  
Oranges and bananas,  
Forage caps and badges  
And packets of Lucky Strike.

Gracie Fields on the radio!  
Americans in the art-deco  
Milk bars! The released Jews  
Blinking in shocked sunlight ...  
A male child in a garden  
Clutching *The Empire News*.

## 2. The Lost Girls

'In ancient shadows and twilights  
Where childhood had strayed'  
I ran round in the playground  
Of Skegoneill Primary School  
During the lunch break,  
Pretending to be a plane.

For months I would dawdle home  
At a respectful distance  
Behind the teacher's daughter,  
Eileen Boyd, who lived  
In a house whose back garden  
Was visible from my window.

I watched her on summer evenings,  
A white dress picking flowers,  
Her light, graceful figure  
Luminous and remote.  
We never exchanged greetings:  
Her house was bigger than ours.

She married an older man  
And went to live in Kenya.  
Perhaps she is there still  
Complaining about 'the natives'.  
It would be nice to know;  
But who can re-live their lives?

Eileen Boyd, Hazel and Heather  
Thompson, Patricia King –  
The lost girls in a ring  
On a shadowy school playground  
Like the nymphs dancing together  
In *The Allegory of Spring*.

## 3. The Last Resort

Salad-and-sand sandwiches  
And dead gulls on the beach;  
Ice-cream in the Arcadia,  
Rain lashing the windows;  
Dull days in the harbour,  
Sunday mornings in church.

One lost July fortnight  
In the Strandmore Hotel  
I watched the maid climb  
The stairs, and went to my room  
Quivering with excitement,  
Randy for the first time.

Years later, the same dim  
Resort has grown dimmer  
As if some centrifugal  
Force, summer by summer,  
Has moved it ever further  
From an imagined centre.

The small hotels are randy  
For custom; but the risen  
People are playing football  
On the sands of Tenerife,  
Far from the unrelaxing  
Scenes of sectarian strife.

Yet the place really existed  
And still can crack a smile  
Should a sunbeam pick out  
Your grimy plastic cup  
And consecrate your vile  
Bun with its parting light.

## 4. The Bicycle

There was a bicycle, a fine  
Raleigh with five gears  
And racing handlebars.  
It stood at the front door  
Begging to be mounted;  
The frame shone in the sun.

I became like a character  
In *The Third Policeman*, half  
Human, half bike, my life  
A series of dips and ridges,  
Happiness a free-wheeling  
Past fragrant hawthorn hedges.

Cape and sou'wester streamed  
With rain when I rode to school  
Side-tracking the bus routes.  
Night after night I dreamed  
Of valves, pumps, sprockets,  
Reflectors and repair kits.

Soon there were long rides  
In the country, wet weekends  
Playing snap in the kitchens  
Of mountain youth hostels,  
Day-runs to Monaghan,  
Rough and exotic roads.

It went with me to Dublin  
Where I sold it the same winter;  
But its wheels still sing  
In the memory, stars that turn  
About an eternal centre,  
The bright spokes glittering.



## new community

Journal of the  
Commission for Racial Equality

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Volume VII, No. 1 Winter 1978/9

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Craig Raine

# So Kisse Good Turtles

John Donne: Language and Style by A. C. PARTRIDGE Deutsch £7.50

In 1936, a gleeful Dylan Thomas informed Vernon Watkins that he had lunched with 'Pope Eliot'. Despite a faint edge of malice, the sobriquet is an index of Eliot's enormous and, on the whole, well-deserved critical prestige. As a poet, he spoke *ex cathedra* and his booming, authoritative pronouncements have produced a multitude of echoes in subsequent criticism. His essay 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921), for instance, has been profoundly influential, even though it is an example of papal fallibility. Take this typical antithesis: 'It is to be observed that the language of these poets is as a rule simple and pure . . . The structure of the sentences, on the other hand, is sometimes far from simple.' The reader has scarcely murmured 'Amen' before he encounters, four pages later, a rogue echo of undiminished volume – the same proposition in exactly inverted form. Eliot is drawing an analogy between the difficulty of modern poetry and that of the metaphysicals: 'we get, in fact, a method curiously similar to that of the "metaphysical poets", similar also in its use of obscure words and simple phrasing.'

When Eliot expounds his famous theory of the dissociation of sensibility in the same essay, the argument is no more coherent. Primarily, he is making a distinction between two types of poetic sensibility. Concurrently, however, he distinguishes between the poet and the less fortunate ordinary man, for whom the disparate experiences of falling in love and reading Spinoza 'have nothing to do with each other'. In pursuing the second distinction, Eliot undermines the first. On the one hand, he argues for a general unification of sensibility in all poets, as opposed to the man in the street: 'a degree of heterogeneity of material compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is *omnipresent in poetry*' (my italics). On the other hand, he maintains that Donne, his contemporaries and his predecessors are to be differentiated from later poets like Tennyson and Browning, because they wrote before 'dissociation of sensibility set in',

before a mysterious 'something' happened to 'the mind of England' – whatever that mythical entity might be.

In fact, as a poet of argument, Donne is intimately related to Dryden and Browning in particular – two of the poets Eliot chose to sever him from. It is no accident that the author of 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' was notorious in 19th-century drawing rooms for his proselytising on Donne's behalf. Both poets are metrically rough. Pound's description of Browning in his pastiche, 'Mesmerism', could apply equally to Donne: 'Here's to you, Old Hippiety-Hop o' the accents.' Both are dramatic poets, though even Donne's most robust openings ('For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love') look etiolated beside Browning's matchless bravura in, say, 'Mr Sludge', with its volatile mixture of mollification, snarled aggression and physical violence:

Aie-aie-aie!

Please, sir! your thumbs are through  
my windpipe, sir!

Ch-ch!

The effects are obvious and impeccable – the way Sludge persistently observes, in extremis, the disparity of rank; the brilliant printed equivalent for wordless choking. Here, Browning is on his own.

As a poet of argument, too, Browning is superior to Donne and matched only by Dryden – Dryden whose expository gift so excluded the dramatic that, in *All for Love*, Antony and Cleopatra debate decorously where Shakespeare makes them quarrel. 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' and Dryden's 'Religio Laici' effortlessly and lucidly sustain complex, consecutive argument. Donne, by and large, argues no better than Eliot. His breathless logic is often presented with some of the jerky rapidity that one associates with the Keystone Cops falling over themselves:

I heard mee say, Tell her anon,  
That my selfe, (that is you, not I,)  
Did kill me, and when I felt mee dye,  
I bid mee send my heart, when I was gone,  
But I alas could there finde none,  
When I had ripp'd me, and search'd  
where hearts dide lye;

It kill'd mee againe, that I who was still true,  
In life, in my last Will should cozen you.

Of course, no one would claim that 'The Legacie' represents Donne at his very best, but the poem is not untypical of the *Songs and Sonets* – either in the preponderance of argument or its inept conduct. It is curious also to note how little these lines conform to the received idea of Donne and the metaphysicals, as we find it expressed in, for example, Pope's *Essay on Criticism*:

Some to *Conceit* alone their Taste confine,

And glitt'ring Thoughts struck out at ev'ry Line.

Struggling with 'The Legacie', one recalls rather Dryden's moan about the limited resources of the language: 'Poetry requires ornament; and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables.' Latin polysyllables, however, are not the only means of ornament, though Donne did use them, always sparingly and sometimes with fine appropriateness:

When love, with one another so

Interanimates two soules . . .

The other obvious ornament available to Donne was metaphor, a device he employs with great unevenness and far less frequently than one might suppose. When Donne is at his worst, one hardly needs Rosemond Tuve's painstaking study of Elizabethan and metaphysical imagery to tell us that he is drawing monotonously on a common stock. The hyperbolic images become stale within the canon. On the other hand, Donne can be brilliant:

So kisse good Turtles, so devoutly nice  
Are Priests in handling reverent Sacrifice,  
And such in searching wounds the Surgeon is  
As wee, when we embrace, or touch, or kisse.

The doves are quite standard, but the comparison with the surgeon blazes with originality. The secret is that, in this elegy, Donne is free from the responsibility of sustained argument: the organising principle is a straight comparison between Donne's beautiful mistress and another's ugly mistress, conducted through a series of discrete epigrams.

Where there is no intricate argument to pursue, Donne is at his best. Sex, the pain of parting, the fear of physical decline are never untouched by intellectual play, but they elicit the effectively simple in Donne:

As liberally, as to a Midwife, shew  
Thy self: cast all, yea, this white linnen hence  
and, 'Sweetest love, I do not goe':

But thinke that we  
Are but turn'd aside to sleepe  
and, 'His Picture':

My body'a sack of bones, broken within,  
And powders blew staines scatter'd on  
my skinne;

If rivall fooles taxe thee to'have loved a man,  
So foule, and course, as, Oh, I may seeme than,  
This shall say what I was . . .

Here, the unexpected force of that plain 'Oh' catches exactly the metrical stress and is made to tell in an utterly uncomplicated way.

In his greatest work, the *Anniversaries*, the overall argument is again simple – a *contemptus mundi* that allows Donne to concentrate on the lavish illustration of his theme. Similarly, the famous 'stiffe twin compasses' image may be intricate in itself, but it is intricate with the clarity of a Hilliard miniature because it depicts absolutely straightforward emotions. The compasses are 'stiffe' since the lovers are reluctant to part; this is the sole element that is left by Donne for the reader to puzzle out.

## WILLIAM BURROUGHS AND THE 'CUT-UP'

The 'cut-up' and 'fold-in' techniques of literary composition, invented by Brion Gysin and developed by William Burroughs in his brilliant, satiric and futuristic novels like *The Soft Machine* and *The Ticket that Exploded*, have perplexed and intrigued readers from the start. In *The Third Mind* (£5.95, illus.) Burroughs and Gysin, explore, document and explain their methods in a dazzling series of collaborations. Essential to an understanding of Burroughs' work, with much new and previously un-published material. Also available is *New Writing and Writers 16* (£4.95 & £2.50) which contains the first publication of Burroughs' illustrated polemical elegy, *Cobble Stone Gardens*, together with new work by Elspeth Davie, Michael Moorcock, Neil Jordan, B. C. Leale, David Craig and others.



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## POLICING THE POLICE

Edited and with an introduction by Peter Hain, *Policing the Police Vol. 1* (£6.95 & £2.95) contains the first in-depth analyses of the new police complaints system and its short-comings (by Derek Humphrey, former reporter for *The Sunday Times* on police affairs) and on the powers available to the police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1976. This act comes up for Parliamentary renewal on March 25th and, as Brian Rose-Smith (a solicitor practising with experience of cases brought under the act) makes clear, it represents a direct threat to civil liberties for as long as it remains on the statute book.

## STEVEN BERKOFF'S 'GROSS INTRUSION'

*Gross Intrusion and Other Stories* (£4.95) is the first book of fiction by playwright, actor and director already well-known for his outrageous and original play *East* and stunning stage adaptations of Kafka, Poe and Aeschylus. In these fourteen powerful, blackly comic and compassionate stories he presents the situation of the sexual and spiritual outsider – uncompromisingly.

The comparison has a deeply imagined metaphoric justness, lucidly undertaken. Its mystery is 'like the Sunne, dazzling, yet plaine to all eyes'. In metaphor, Donne outstrips Dryden and Browning, as they are more than a match for his argufying verse. The latter brings to mind Mr Woodhouse's comment on Mrs Elton: 'She speaks a little too quick. A little quickness there is which rather hurts the ear.' And if Pope Eliot defended Donne's difficulty, we ought to realise that he was also defending himself against the charge of obscurity. Further, Eliot's obscurity is radically different in kind from that of Donne, whose only real follower in recent times has been William Empson.

A. C. Partridge also has a weakness for notes and *John Donne: Language and Style* is disappointing largely because it never transcends annotation. Indeed, by treating Donne's work in groups (the *Elegies*, the *Satyres*, *Songs and Sonets*, etc) he effectively precludes the possibility of any general argument about his alleged subject. He takes instead one or two gobbits from each group for comment when one might have expected him to write chapters on diction, syntax, metaphor and scan-sion, ending with a final chapter on style. Of course, these topics are touched upon, but in a shoddy, piecemeal way. Partridge's study has no real overview.

But how informative is the commentary he does offer? On elementary matters like Elizabethan orthography (*I for ay; then for than*) he is clear enough. An O-level candidate would find this useful. The same candidate, however, would be baffled by, for instance, this comment on 'To Sir Edward Herbert, at Julyers':

He [Herbert] was eleven years Donne's junior, and had written a satirical exercise on *The State Progress of Ill* (1608), which was indebted to Donne's satires; hence [my italics] the references in the following passage to the Ark of Noah.

The enigmatic connective is explained only if one consults (as Professor Partridge has done) W. Milgate's edition of the *Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters*: Milgate bothers to quote the end of Herbert's poem:

The World, as in the Ark of *Noah* rests,  
Compos'd as then, few Men, and many Beasts.

Here and elsewhere, one is better off with the original commentary, rather than Professor Partridge's truncated transcription of it.

In literary matters, Professor Partridge's book is sadly adrift. From Donne's 'The Anagram', he extracts the following message: 'Content yourself with a homely woman, if she has no physical handicaps.' Actually, Donne's poem is a steady crescendo of insult ('though seaven yeares, she in the Stews had laid/A Nunnery durst receive, and thinke a maid'), but Professor Partridge is impervious to its irony. Likewise, his misinterpretation of the 'Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day' is a collector's item of perversity. Not for the Professor a lament for a dead woman, rather an allegorical account of Donne's spiritual autobiography, his turn from flesh to the spirit. Equally entertaining is the critique: 'many phrases, such as *much deare treasure* (33), acquire a metonymic significance that engrosses the mind through aptness and intellectual fecundity.' Again, Milgate's notes solve the problem of Professor Partridge's exposition. He means that 'much deare treasure' alludes to Matthew 6:20. Finally, two gems: 'rhythmical thinking' and 'thought-generated tropes'. As opposed to oil-fired tropes, presumably?

New Statesman 16 March 1979

Patricia Craig

## Fishy

**The Praise Singer** by MARY RENALT *John Murray* £4.95

**Proteus** by MORRIS WEST *Collins* £4.95

**Side-Effect** by RAYMOND HAWKEY *Cape* £4.95

**Requiem at Rogano** by STEPHEN KNIGHT *Eyre Methuen* £5.50

Though all these novels fall into categories which are, at best, para-literary, it is likely that each will be popular and sell well. Two of the authors – Mary Renault and Morris West – are well established with the general public; of the others, Raymond Hawkey is co-author of a book which predicted Watergate and Stephen Knight is solely responsible for one which posited a final solution to the mystery of Jack the Ripper. Only Mary Renault, however, achieves a satisfactory compromise between literary and commercial requirements, and she does it by overlaying her narrative with a seductive gloss which compels assent.

*The Praise Singer* is the story of Simonides of Keos, Ionian poet and musician, wanderer, reciter of the verses of Homer and composer of his own. In his childhood Simonides was an uncomely, unwanted son, fit only to tend sheep; but in his youth he found an easy master, Kleobis the bard, and from then on the course of his life was settled and smooth. There were unheavals, but Simonides prospered; his songs found favour and his ugliness kept him out of the embraces of tyrants and aristocrats. Simonides as an old man on a dry island, being played to by a boy, reviews the events of his past in a mood of reverie; and this retrospective viewpoint enables Renault to harp on one note only: that of order and grace. Her prose style is lucid and romantic, without the least flirtation with complexity. If we accept Benedetto Croce's view that the

historic sense is an intuition, then we have to regard Mary Renault as a first-rate historical novelist. The particulars of everyday life in a bygone era are less important to her than the complete, clear view: her forte is, in the literal sense, clairvoyance.

*Proteus* is another kettle, or box, of fish, large in conception and symbolic in its resolution. A fish in a box is the secret sign connected with an underground, worldwide organisation founded to combat the forces of darkness: the revolutionary movements open to corruption, the proliferation of hired assassins, the limits imposed on freedom, the torture chambers, the enemies within. The list leaves no one in any doubt that the time is out of joint, and if anyone is born to set it right it's John Spada, biggest fish in an international pond, *Proteus* in person. The novel is about power, its uses and misuses, and it is presented in portentous and unequivocal terms, eschewing all moral ambiguity. As a substitute for the latter we're offered the proposition that a retaliatory killing may be carried out, with justice, by the pure at heart and the steady of nerve. It isn't enough, but it is all the heroic structure can accommodate.

An ability to prognosticate, claimed by his publishers for Morris West, is a quality that's also attributed to Raymond Hawkey, whose novel *Side-Effect* is centred on the future possibilities for corruption inherent in spare-part surgery. A young woman visits a clinic in London for a routine check-up, and shortly afterwards she's being held prisoner in Miami, pending the removal of her inner organs for transfer to patients willing to pay for them – through the nose if necessary. Events, suppositions and depravities multiply.

After the political and the technological we have the psychical thriller. *Requiem at Rogano* opens in London in 1902, but moves back, from time to time, to Northern Italy in the 15th century. It's based on a fairly ingenious idea but the controlling principle is quickly allowed to get out of hand; in the end a metaphysical pattern is more important to the author than character or plot. Reincarnation has taken place on a simply farcical scale.

## W.H.Smith £2,500 Literary Award has been won by Mark Girouard for 'Life in the English Country House'

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WHSMITH 

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

## The Powers That Be

The Worlds Playhouse, Newcastle  
*Joking Apart Globe*

Back in 1977 the company at the Playhouse collapsed in something not absolutely unakin to administrative chaos, making Newcastle the only major city in England without a rep of its own. Since then there has, however, been some energetic if still-inadequate gap-filling. A new outfit called the Tynewear Theatre Company is presently touring Brecht's *Arturo Ui* around the north-east, Newcastle included; and the RSC has twice mounted theatrical missions to the Geordies. Indeed, last year's Stratford company is at both Theatre Royal and Gulbenkian Studio until 7 April, offering a thrilling *Shrew*, a lively *Measure for Measure*, and small-house revivals of the *Merchant* and Howard Brenton's *Churchill Play*, which (you may recall) is set in a concentration camp for unruly English leftists in that year of grace, 1984. Meanwhile a new piece at the Playhouse itself, performed by students from Newcastle University, provides us with a name all too liable to be pinned over a cell door should Britain indeed become the European Chile: Edward Bond.

It was his *Worlds* that took me across the Tyne bridge last week, and an absorbing if maddening trip it proved to be. The subject is revolutionary violence, its purpose, its justification, its permissible perimeters. The 4,000-odd employees of an unlovely industrial Goliath are not intimidated when the powers that be suggest they should abandon their strike in hopes of securing the release of the company chairman, captured by radicals and threatened with execution unless all the workers' demands are met. At any rate, their leaders take the view that he is a plundering criminal who 'depends on force as much as any terrorist - there's no real difference'. But what are they to do when a harmless chauffeur is taken hostage in mistake for another boardroom bigwig, and promised precisely the same death?

Should they offer their bosses a lesson in humanity by calling off the strike? As it happens, the prisoner is killed, not by his captors, but by the chairman, who has been rescued and eased from office by his fellow-directors, and has thereupon succumbed to the fate that regularly overtakes Bond's unluckier characters, becoming a sort of half-mad ghost, impotently haunting his own past and other people's present. The more important conclusion, that's to say the moral and political one, reveals itself as guarded, equivocal.

The play is an odd mixture of drama and debate, complexity and a simplicity that sometimes verges on crudity. The executive toadying becomes lumpishly farcical. One worker is allowed to offer others a plodding lesson in primitive economics, after the manner of *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*. Two terrorists give the play its title with a long,

liturgical discussion about the world of appearances and moral claims and the world of reality, greed and violence, arguing that it is necessary to follow the laws of the latter in order to give the former substance. Much of this tends to confirm what has been apparent for some time, that Bond no longer trusts action to embody argument and increasingly prefers the explicit to the implicit. Nevertheless, the argument itself is often finely presented, and arresting theatrical images still recur: for instance, the doomed chauffeur, swathed in bandages from top to toe, tottering across the stage like a mummy from an X-movie, emblem of human thralldom and helplessness.

There are some striking performances from the amateur cast, working under the author's own baton. But with or without Graham Blockey, Dave Spear and the best of the rest, the play must certainly be seen more widely, if only to discover if we can agree on the solution to an intriguing puzzle. This is Bond's first look at British society since *Saved*, 13 years ago. Has he grimly celebrated the occasion by taking a step of which Brenton, Hare, Barker and the other dramatists of the Left have proved chary? Is he the first playwright of standing to say that a revolutionary end justifies terrorism as a means, here, in Blighty? At the end the strike leader, with whom we've been allowed to identify, refuses to confirm or deny such a suggestion; but there's enough in the play to indicate that his and his author's answer is, in fact, a nervous yes.

Yet against this is Bond's much-admired compassion, his Blakean belief that what hurts one diminishes all. In favour is his conviction, evident enough in *The Worlds*, that things are getting worse, far worse, critically worse: indeed, that the planet must be saved from self-annihilation without hesitation or delay. It would be an ironic development, given the humanity of his *Fool* and the scepticism about revolutionaries-in-power of his *Lear*. But it would not, I fear, be an altogether illogical one.

In Alan Ayckbourn's edgy, insecure world it isn't the nasty people who do the damage, but the ones with the big smiles and glad hands. Richard and Anthea, joint epicentres of the earthquake zone of *Joking Apart*, are a nice, outgoing couple, who can hardly be blamed if everything they touch turns to gold and everyone to dust. He is the sort who invariably wins at tennis, even if he doesn't try or actually tries not to. She is ever-ready with help if, say, the vicar's wife wants some envelopes delivered, or even if she doesn't. His effortless instinct for business makes the firm thousands, leaving his partner, a hyper-industrious Finn, to wonder if he had any professional purpose at all. Her children are quite the most pleasant in the neighbourhood. Their big, rambling house and garden is always open to their friends, always full of

fruit-cup and good cheer. To venture inside is to risk destruction in the very tastiest variety of wasp-trap.

Many of Ayckbourn's plays are about insensitivity, and several about an insensitive bonhomie. Few men were ever as well-meaning as Colin in *Absent Friends*, or as cheerful as Dennis in *Just Between Ourselves*; yet the one managed to leave his friends' nerves and marriages in tatters and the other reduced his wife to catatonia. *Joking Apart* is in the same line, but it is less clear-cut and demands of its audiences much subtler powers of discrimination. Richard and Anthea are authentically generous people, and the accusation flung at their disappearing backs by the agonised Finn, that they seek power over their acquaintances, exposes his envy more than their darker motives. Both can be considerate and tactful. She cannot, after all, help it if the vicar falls in love with her, thus accelerating the breakdown of his wife and marriage, nor if an old admirer wastes his youth bringing down weekend guests who look just like her. She is lovable. Nor can he be held responsible for the decline of his partner, Sven, from a proud and officious know-all to a self-proclaimed mediocrity, drained of all confidence and offhandedly interrupted by the wife who once worshipped him. He is able. They cannot be accused of luring their victims on to the rocks with sirencalls: their very existence is enough to provoke passers-by to shipwreck themselves.

Alison Steadman and Christopher Cazenove play these blithe and beautiful monsters without biasing the evidence either for or against them: their guest-list of walking wounded and living dead includes Marcia Warren, Jennifer Piercey, and Robert Austin, the last an exquisitely-judged Sven, blinking incredulously through thin-rimmed specs at personal failures his scientific detachment obliges him to admit and his self-respect finds intolerable. Only Julian Fellowes, a somewhat goofy vicar, tends towards caricature, and even then not so far that he cannot stifle the laughter that at first greets his abject admission of love. These are, on the whole, painfully plausible people in a plausibly painful situation. Why, then, the grudging reviews that their collective efforts have received to date?

In two words, preconception and prejudice. For some, Ayckbourn is a bravura funny-man wilfully denying paid-up audiences their quota of escape. For others, he is simply a commercial farceur with ideas above his station, which is (so to speak) East Cheam and not Waterloo. Well, *Joking Apart* seems to me to answer both factions more than adequately. It's true that the first half is perilously low-key, a series of casual conversations drifting in and out of the tennis court that half-fills stage left. But it fulfils its function, because the second half becomes increasingly charged and fraught, and reaches a climax of grisly hilarity in an on-court battle between the vengeful Sven and the accommodating Richard, who makes everything worse by losing too deliberately. The last scene, with the visiting derelicts giving empty advice to Anthea's contemptuously polite daughter on her coming-of-age, is as good as anything Ayckbourn has written, justification in itself of his continuing attempt to darken his comedy and deepen our laughter. In fact, I have a strong suspicion that the play as a whole is his best so far; and that means it is very interesting indeed.

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## Television

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Julian Barnes

### No Way

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There were various kindly attempts to make *The Serpent Son*, the first part of BBC 2's £350,000 version of the *Oresteia*, relevant and contemporary for the tube viewer. The *Evening Standard*, for instance, did its bit by comparing Agamemnon's dilemma to that of the Duke of Edinburgh being faced with deciding whether or not to sacrifice Princess Anne (not entirely silly – I can imagine a few chorusing voices urging Phil's puellucidal hand); while co-translator Frederic Raphael, interviewed on *Tonight*, gave us Aeschylus as D. W. Griffith, grand founder of an art form whose work contained all the techniques subsequently deployed by others. The *Radio Times* for its part gave us Diana Rigg in yellow greasepaint sunglasses, her bosom entwined by flexi-serpents.

The trouble was, those arguing the case for contemporary relevance didn't seem to have got through to the production team. Lots of words were lost among all the foreground music (Humphrey Searle and the Ambrosian Singers: I suppose, once hired, they had to be heard); the sets – monster cardboard mazes and the like – looked as if they'd been acquired from some adult Hamley's; while the costumes were a jarring mixture of *Star Wars* and *Living in the Past*. And if this wasn't bad enough, there was a casting problem: not the failure to get good actors, but the choice of obtrusive ones, who bawled their own modernity at us but made no effective bridge. Early on, the camera panned in on an old augurer, fiddling away with his speaking giblets like Jonathan Miller on *The Body in Question*. It wasn't Miller (though it could have been, given the production's concept of congruity); when the croaky, mad, Irish-vagrant voice finally started up, you realised that beneath the wattle-'n'-wood it was none other than Patrick Magee – the voice of Krapp, the voice of Beckett. Ah well, you could hear them murmuring all over the country as they consciencelessly switched over to Notts Forest v Grasshoppers ('Nearly a Greek tragedy' – Russell Davies), perhaps it will get better next week. At least Helen Mirren is dead.

One of the first guests on the new *Russell Harty Show* (LWT) looked as if he'd strayed in from the set of *The Serpent Son*. He was a new-wave singer called Duffo, a ginger-dyed fake-camp Australian who pranced on wrapped from head to foot in transparent clingfilm kitchen wrapping. Katie Boyle must have approved; and at least, one felt, the sweat would be trapped inside. In the established manner of the School of New Talentlessness, Duffo made his own lack of skills the central platform of his act, singing a song about having had his brain removed; he came on waving a revolving model of a brain, though a little shyly, as if he feared that being outrageous might in fact outrage. When asked to chat, the Bondi Bowie proved ill at ease with words; so instead he stroked co-guest Terry Wogan's thigh, and then began to make up, or across, to Russell, implying, well, that thing

which Parky is always going on about when he has sensitive chaps on his show. Eventually, Duffo leaned out of his chair towards Russ and, to a soft whisper from his wrapping, exclaimed, 'I have been TOLD'. The famous Conduit streamed gently (maybe a clingfilm covering to the Lip is the answer) and its owner hastily – but not quite cuttably – waved the first half to a close.

At least Duffo didn't give us his rendition of *My Way*, though it can only be a matter of time before the ego-tempting lyrics ensnare him, in the way that they have already gobbled up some scores of recording stars. *Arena* (BBC-2) offered an entertaining if deeply pointless collage of those who have sung this anthem of the Me Decade – all of whom it fits with the stretchy ease of a pair of one-size tights. There was even Wilfrid Mellers to provide deep textual analysis. The Professor pointed out, for instance, that there was no mention of love in the song; whereupon, shortly afterwards, various warblers sang in turn, 'I've loved, I've laughed and cried ...' What no one pointed out was the ridiculously creaking syntax of the song, its contrived rhymes ('not in a shy way/...did it my way'), and the gut appeal it holds for the meanest crooner – that of raising his banal and egocentric career into a heroic and defiant progress.

The weekend turned out to be quite bookish, a rare and pleasant thing nowadays. *Read All About It* (BBC-1) gave me renewed faith in the power of the press (as well as renewed faith in Ronnie Harwood) by instantly responding to my Bring Back Bakewell campaign; very good she was too. *The Book Programme* (BBC-2) returned, with the worst title graphics I've seen in a long time – fuzzy, unrecognisable portraits of authors (maybe it will turn out to be some sort of Booker quiz). But after this distressing start a solid, nuggety chat developed between Iris Murdoch and Robert Robinson, whose hairstyle grows more speculative and baroque with each series (this time the back strands curved out and away from the head and were lacquered into a sort of horizontal hempen hammock before ending up miraculously glued in place behind the right ear). Miss Murdoch talked sagely of the rival pursuits of goodness and art, and of her puritanical suspicion that since art gives the artist so much pleasure it probably isn't doing much about making him a better person at the same time. It was good (using the word inexcusably loosely) to hear a novelist – especially one with such a large output – talking about the unfailing enjoyment and self-gratification of writing; it made a change from the whingeing balls one constantly hears from writers about the pain and drudgery they incur while being driven by artistic necessity to instruct the public.

Ibsen, to judge from Colin Nears's dramatised biopic (BBC-2), didn't get much fun out of writing; and there wasn't much to be had from the film either. It contained the most intrusive device I've come across in a long while: three chiaroscuro-lit actors who sat around a table posing as literary critics caught in vivid mid-discussion about the merits of Ibsen. This is the way they were made to talk: 'I mean, what sort of thing was put on in Norway when he first started?'; 'I think he wrote 26 plays in all – that's quite a large output'; 'But the ambiguity is precisely what's interesting about it'; 'What was it Shaw said about Ibsen?' One of them sneered: 'Classical psychoanalysis!' and another snapped back:

'Yes – but not bad for his time.' One pipe-smoking bookman was cast as a sceptic; two were enthusiasts; none of them interrupted, drank a drop, lost his temper, boasted about money, got his facts wrong, made a joke, or impugned the chastity of his opponent's wife. It was all grotesquely unrealistic: if this, one reflected, was how writer-director Nears imagined living English bookmen – whom he has had the opportunity of observing – then how on earth could we trust his vision of a famous dead foreigner?

Ibsen wrote that 'Anyone who wants to understand me must know Norway' – and the frequent repetition of this quote presumably indicated its intended centrality to the film. Yet apart from a few pleasant helicopter-shots of fiords there was little explanatory stuff about the country. Instead, the programme mostly sought out parallels between the tundral bleaknesses of Ibsen's private life and the equally bleak situations in his plays. In order to put more than a fine point on it, Ian Hogg (an Ibsen who looked like Ibsen, though just as much like Thackeray in a shaving-foam beard) took on Solness, Brand, Borkman and Rubek in four of the play extracts; while his wife and other significant figures also doubled up. The odd effect of this was to extend the life but at the same time to contract the plays. They seemed to lose their universality and their hold, to become moral therapy for a self-obsessed grouch; and they couldn't just be that, could they?

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## Radio

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Peter Porter

### Tequila Time

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*Hi-Fi Theatre* (Radio 4) is Drama Department's opulent showcase, and since each production is broadcast three times, it can command large scale resources. Thus a play may last two hours, use a big cast and expect the luxury of a special musical score, with the aid, if required, of the Radiophonic Workshop (about to celebrate its twenty-first birthday). If you murmur mutinously that all this was taken for granted in the old days, then someone at hard-pressed Broadcasting House will reply that such harking-back is itself a kind of opulence. The productions broadcast so far have had a sense of the heyday of radio drama, of people staying in to hear the best actors and effects men going over the top to produce that ultra-realism which television can hardly mimic.

*Under the Volcano* shared with *Moby Dick* several qualities, but was, I thought, more successful. Each was adapted from a famous novel, had a highly obtrusive score and enjoyed the services of John Tydeman as director. Each novel seems flamboyantly overwritten to me, but the pretentious auto-destruction and self-communing of Malcolm Lowry's consul running loose in Mexico fits the resources of radio better than Melville's whale-chase does. The very title *Hi-Fi Theatre* tells you that sound is going to be one of the *raison d'être*, and every noise which could suggest Cuernavaca, Mexico on the Day of the Dead was brought into play. I got used to and

eventually to like the ostinato of swizzle sticks in glasses, as the Consul waded deeper into a sea of tequila and mescal, but Graham Collier's jazz-based score worked against the rest of the tapestry of sound relentlessly. Not much has been written about the role of music as an accompaniment to spoken drama, but it seems to me that the more forward and continuous a specially-composed score is, the less it should be made to compete with other effects which are also designed to bring out the drama.

In *Under the Volcano* the words came towards you on a wave of disparate sounds. It was a Ministry of too many talents. Fortunately, the words had been most carefully filleted from Lowry's garrulous text by Eric Ewans, and were spoken well by the excellent cast – and, in the case of Norman Rodway's consul, miraculously. The gods must have felt that they owed Mr Rodway something after his ordeal in television's *Tycoon*, so they guided his talent to this Lowry script. He had three times as many words to speak as any other actor – he had to address them to himself, to his wife, his brother and to assorted Mexicans, but each one of them was as definitively etched as in anything I have heard on radio. I would not have imagined that lines such as 'You're interfering with my great battle against death', and 'I choose Hell, I love Hell, I can't wait to get back there' were speakable at all, but Rodway made them veritable ariosos, and in so doing, redeemed Lowry's heavy symbolism and expressionist wrangling. I hope someone in Drama Department remembers to nominate him for the best actor section of this year's radio awards.

Radio came into its own, too, in portraying the habitual drinker's paranoia – when the consul believes he can see the sun glinting on the tequila bottle he has hidden in the garden, or at the ritual crucifixion of his putting on his socks. Thinking of how the films would handle these lost 24 hours makes you grateful that the several screen adaptations are still lying on the shelf. With all its inequalities, this radio performance made *Under the Volcano* a more moving and less self-satisfied work of art than the novel itself. Drink has had too many ship-wrecked souls trying to describe its siren songs. I think it behoves us to be priggish about it. In the not altogether admirable convention of books made out of the mythologising of tortured minds, I prefer the sober sadness of Corvo's *Desire and Pursuit of the Whole* to the boozy despair of *Under the Volcano*.

One of the greatest radio actors died last year and Radio 4 produced *The Voice of Carleton Hobbs* in his honour. Although his was an instantly recognisable timbre, he was an actor of chameleon-like ability and served radio selflessly and with virtuosity, a rare mixture of skill and devotion. I cannot remember when Hobbs was absent from the Third Programme for even a month at a time: in all, he notched up over 3,000 performances. Hallam Tennyson's memorial compilation could give us a taste of only a few of them, but included some of the things Hobbs did best, including three of his assumptions for Henry Reed. Hobbs as the outraged self-loving brother of *A Very Great Man Indeed* was transformed into Hobbs the soliloquising lizard in *The Streets of Pompeii*, and ended as Giacomo Leopardi's broken-hearted father facing his despairing son in the stifling palace

of Recanati. Best of all, and more amusing than the standard anecdotes of his loveableness, was his reading from Horace Walpole's description of sly sexual shenanigans in a party going down the Thames.

Literature on its own does poorly on the air now, and, since nobody thought to do anything about it on Radio 3, it was left to *Kaleidoscope* (Radio 4) to mark Stephen Spender's seventieth birthday. Paul Vaughan talked to Spender for the whole of one evening's programme and came within an ace of tying him down – not an easy thing to do, since Spender is a master of the technique of avoiding awkward questions by confessing to other and irrelevant peccadillos. Spender's confession that his generation of middle-class authors was in love with the idea of the working classes still left much unsaid, as did his regret that he had wasted an awful lot of time writing criticism and journalism instead of poetry. It is possible to do both.

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## Sport

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Russell Davies

# Vale of Tiers

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In case Brian Clough reads this, and adds it to his store of evidence indicating that broadcasts really do keep down football attendances, I should state right away that I had already decided to go to a game last Saturday afternoon even before Match of the Day was called off. The lure of the Cambridge United v. Notts County had been irresistible. What! The oldest League club in the world against a home side boasting hot-shot £300,000 property Alan Biley, in whom Spurs are trying vainly to suppress an interest? It was a spectatorial must, worth a pound of anybody's licence-fee, I mean money.

Cambridge Utd is still a small club in resources and outlook, and on a day like Saturday it seems to get smaller. A Fenland wind, rotten with damped-off celery stalks, came bowling straight down the ground from the Allotments End, where there is no stand – just a very shallow open terrace, caged off for visiting supporters (on this occasion no more than a couple of hundred or so). Every so often, an insulting spit of rain put a fine wet edge on one's discomfort. 'The club shop is open,' barked the Tannoy, 'for the sale of mugs, rattles, scarves, badges . . .' ' . . . And players,' remarked a police sergeant authoritatively. There was disappointment on this score, too: no Biley. He had failed what the *Cambridge Evening News* was later to call 'a secret fitness test behind the stand' (that's about as secret as you can get at the Abbey Stadium). 'Who they goin' to play up front then?' growled an already suffering voice behind me on the corner terrace. 'Finney and Darkie,' came the old-fashioned reply: i.e. Tom Finney, the optimistically christened Irish striker, and Derrick Christie, a black winger, one of the club's bigger purchases at 30-something thousand. In the event, these two were joined for a time in attack by Mick Leach, the former QPR utility player.

It proved, actually, to be a game rich in dwindling veterans. Cambridge had the ex-Norwich defender Dave Stringer, who looks less mothballed than most, and the far from wieldy Bill Garner as substitute; while Notts County trotted out the most aptly-named of all centrebacks, Jeff Blockley, and relied heavily in midfield on Arthur Mann, ex-Manchester City, and on one of the most widely deplored of the World Cup Scots, Don Masson. I remember being astonished just a few seasons ago by Masson's distribution at QPR, when for a brief time that unfulfilled team seemed almost potty with talent. Here he was player-coach, and possibly too much the latter; but on such a kick-and-rush day, anyone hitting the ball with less than full power tended to look fussy. The crowd, anyway, came to the cheerful conclusion that 'Masson' must be short for masturbation.

It was plain almost at once that Cambridge was a side used to getting good results from traditional crosses curled away from the keeper, but that nobody this time was going to get much joy from these against Blockley and his equally strapping colleague Stubbs. At the other end, County forwards Hook and Vinter looked quick on the break, and after ten minutes, Vinter did not even need the speed when taking the ball straight through a square defence. His shot was somewhat scooped, but the blasting wind forced it down into a lob-like parabola; it thumped against the bar and back into the clutches of goalkeeper Webster. The reaction on the terraces was hysterical laughter: relief, I dare say, but also a heavy tinge of the inferiority complex.

Feeling cheated, County put on a craggy face. Hooks was booked for offences of the gob, Masson for a foul on Christie; and someone in midfield was heartless enough to knock the stuffing out of Cambridge's tiny Steve Spriggs, the only player in any Division, I believe, over whom Brian Flynn of Leeds towers majestically. It had been a hasty, raw, red-eared half, not much appreciated by 5,157 shivering souls. 'Tell you wot', volunteered one bloodshot observer of the play, 'I wish I had some o' this to put on moi garden.'

But even though the pop-song chosen to enliven half-time was Elvis Costello's *Oliver's Army* (refrain: 'And I would rather be anywhere else but here too-day . . .'), there was as yet no real sign that this was going to be a really classic misery day for home supporters. It all started about five minutes after the interval, when a header by Finney beat the keeper and was handled by a back on its way, so it seemed, over the line. The ref first signalled a goal, then consulted a linesman, then commuted the sentence to a penalty; and we all watched, not very thunderstruck, as Finney muffed, scuffed, bumbled and trundled the kick vaguely towards the left-hand post. Goalkeeper McManus could not have flopped on it more gratefully if he'd been his namesake Mick, applying the deciding shoulder-press to the Wild Man of Borneo.

Down, down, down: Christie, Cambridge's one forward whose movements had not seemed to be dictated by the wind (either Nature's or his own), was stretchered off. Stringer was booked for the most innocuous trip since the Owl and the Pussycat went to sea. The queue for mushy peas grew back to its half-time length. Garner, the sub, tried to look as busy as a top-heavy lumberer can, but Cambridge's effort was dying. Twice in the

last five minutes, the home keeper had to do horizontal wonders to keep Vinter out. Ninety minutes passed without a goal – it would have been the fourth goalless draw in Div. II that day. But in injury time, an extra-huge wind-assisted clearance kick from McManus put Mann through on the left, and from an unpromising angle he torpedoed Webster with ease and went dancing and leaping away, punching the silent air. Wonn, as the saying goes, nil.

Unlucky on the day, Cambridge complain of similar ill-fortune all season. Injuries, of course, the worst being to newly-signed striker Gordon Sweetzer, who has been able to make only one substitute appearance all season. But then I wonder, thinking of this small, abashed crowd in its rudimentary ground (only one half-pitch-length grandstand and precious little covered terracing), whether Cambridge are not simply embarrassed by the possibility of good fortune. A run of results such as they have sometimes had this season – away wins, for goodness sake, by 2-0 at Brighton, 3-1 at Stoke and 2-0 at Sunderland – would have put them up where those clubs are. But I don't believe that the Abbey Stadium (more abbey than stadium) can handle the idea of a success. What would they do with it, in a town where it is notoriously difficult to drag the public out of range of their five-bar Belling Glowmaster simulated hearths?

Perhaps the lesson of the medieval cathedral is appropriate here: the people need to be shown success – buildings, acreage, splendour – before they can be relied upon to come and worship. So Cambridge must soon take the risk, and build. Alan Biley may find, next time he emerges from behind the grandstands, that he's been cashed in to buy another vale of tiers.

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## Films

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John Coleman

## Nuts

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**The Boys from Brazil** (X) *Classic, Haymarket; Scene; Studio 1*

**La Tortue sur le Dos** (X) *Paris Pullman*

**Nighthawks** (X) *Gate, Notting Hill*

**Madame de . . .** (A) *Camden Plaza*

The Ira Levin original remains a closed book to me, but reliable sources report that Franklin Schaffner's *The Boys from Brazil*, with a screenplay by Heywood Gould, is a pretty faithful rendering. Mr Levin would seem to have the Midas touch when it comes to turning out filmable bestsellers. Like *Rosemary's Baby*, the new work does not so much verge as unashamedly hinge upon the preposterous. The film sets off in the currently modish no-expenses-spared manner, commuting between Paraguay and Vienna and soon to take in a familiar red London bus, a snowy Scandinavian expanse, small-town Pennsylvania, even – I am assured – the Brazil of the title.

It would have us believe that the appalling Dr Josef Mengele, the concentration camp operator who used humans as laboratory

guinea-pigs, is not merely alive and well and living in South America (as he may well be) but about to launch on the world the results of a 14-year-old experiment. To this end, he summons to him a band of staunch Nazis as assassins: they are, without questions, to murder 94 ordinary, Aryan men scattered over the globe: each of the victims will be 65 on or about the day of his death and the mysterious, macabre enterprise is scheduled for completion in two-and-a-half years. A young Jewish American, soon to be tracked down and disposed of, has however bugged the fateful gathering where Mengele announces his project and, before dying, manages to communicate fragments of his findings to the ageing but relentless hunter of war criminals, Ezra Lieberman, toiling away in his leaking, document-stuffed Viennese apartment.

What follows is a sort of ludicrous detective story, with a handful of authentic shocks and many a mouthful of unspeakable lines. With what appear to be padded cheeks, oriental eyes, dyed black hair and moustache, the All-American Gregory Peck is cross-cast as Mengele (having half-throttled one of his minions at a Nazi celebration, he responds to the guests' horrified cries for a medico quite snappishly: 'I am a doctor, you idiot') and, in a relieving about-face after his dentist-torturer Szell from Uruguay in Schlesinger's *Marathon Man*, wispy-haired Laurence Olivier shuffles indomitably through as Lieberman. A determined picturesqueness or bizarrerie informs a trio of murders; a peeing man is crushed between crates by a car; a hand-puppet cackles by a hanging telephone while Michael Gough hangs upstairs; a fellow is pushed from an icy height – in each case, the concern is with exoticism rather than efficacy. The crucial shock comes when Lieberman discovers the dadless teenaged sons (all played by sullen-mugged Jeremy Black) are identical: to hear Master Black, as Gough's lad, enunciate, 'Don't you understand English, you arse?' is, incidentally, to die a little, laughing. And, alas, the necessary suspension of disbelief is steadily grounded by comic infelicities, not least when Mengele shifts uneasily before a pack of snarling black hounds near to a thoroughly bloody dénouement. But the major stumbling-block is the plot's centre, which is – as the alert may by now have guessed – to do with cloning about, the production of a world-wide brood of little Hitlers. What the hell they are supposed to do with one another when they grow to manhood (can you conceive of an Attila tolerating a dozen look-and-think-alikes?) is never pursued. More disturbing than this, because sublimely distasteful, is the trivialisation of one of the dirtiest chapters in human history that is implicit throughout.

Luc Béraud has made some shorts and worked as assistant to Marguerite Duras, Robbe-Grillet, Jacques Rivette and Claude Miller. *La Tortue sur le Dos*, or 'Turtle on Its Back', is his first feature, written with Miller, who also appears briefly in it as a friend of the protagonist, Paul (Jean-François Stévenin); both are blocked authors, as an opening interview with an American journalist establishes. The first half, in a lot of quick, faded-out glimpses, fairly stakes a claim on fresh territory: creative business about not being in business creatively. Paul, who had some success with a novel, *Portraits*, six years earlier, is now living with and off delightful Camille (Bernadette Lafont), who is patently too good for

him, an impotent baldie in his mid-thirties. We see him crossing out more lines than he writes, visiting cinemas, skirt-chasing for re-assurance, waiting for Camille to come back from her job as furniture-varnisher ('Those hands aren't touching my cock,' he quips, French style) with a *baguette* and the paper, settling sulkily for ghost-writing the memoirs of an ex-Foreign Legion general.

Then Camille kicks him out for infidelity and overall bad faith, not a moment too soon, and the film may (or may not) move into fantasy. Paul is robbed by a couple of psychopaths, picked up by the cops and then flung from their van, has a spell in hospital, shares a hotel room with a black drug-addict, gets an unexpected loan from the Miller-friend, somehow looks to have finished his book (called 'L'Homme de Chambre' – the black man?), and gets off a train to meet a smiling Camille, sun breaking through rain: freeze. What the moral is, or indeed the point, I cannot divulge, having no notion and Paul being such an unreckonable prospect. If he can get away from in-jokes and references and memories of certain of the directors he has previously worked with, M. Béraud (there are those signs of a sharpish, humorous, elliptic talent early on) could make something good and complete. As it is, the turtle ends up on its back in dreamland, and not on all fours, crawling back to reality, as some have proposed.

*Nighthawks*, written and directed by Ron Peck and Paul Hallam, is an honest, low-budget movie, an exploration of part of the homosexual world, made and staffed largely by homosexuals for all of us. Its makers' evident and expressed concern not to deal in the usual gay stereotypes has resulted in long stretches of didacticism and dreariness. Most of the action centres round Jim (a sensitive if rather anaemic performance from Ken Robertson), a geography teacher in a scruffy London comprehensive where the kids appear to rule, OK? Jim goes from pick-up to pick-up, his usual hunting-ground a dimly-lit disco. A supply teacher, Judy, after her painfully mimed initial shock at his acknowledged gayness, is there as a useful though obvious device to enable him to open his heart, talk out his confusions in public. There is an interesting audacity when his young class get to him ('Sir, is it true you're bent?') and it is a pity, as he himself says to an admonitory headmaster, that this 'discussion' – in fact, it is mostly stock-response abuse – isn't prolonged. Certainly a good reel or so of the disco bobbing up and down (to an inventive electronic score by David Graham Ellis) could have been beneficially lost. At the end of it all, one couldn't help reflecting that there are hundreds of thousands of 'straights' who lead not dissimilar lives of drifting sexual relationships, grey days lit by the odd bright night. Those eager to know more of the sheer tenacity of purpose that lay behind *Nighthawks'* making will find a useful article in the Winter '78/'79 issue of *Sight and Sound*. No space to do more than vehemently urge a visit to the revival of Max Ophüls's beautifully elegant and still potent *Madame de . . .* Danielle Darrieux and Charles Boyer have never been better than in this fin-de-siècle tale of a pair of hocked earrings, of schooled and formalised passions: only De Sica registers now as uneasy and wooden. I am unrepentant in preferring this penultimate film to the over-praised *Lola Montès*.

## Weekend Competition

No 2557

Set by Jim Anthony

Three wonderful people called Stein;  
There's Gert and there's Ep and there's Ein.  
Gert writes in blank verse,  
Erp sculptures or worse  
And nobody understands Ein.

This old favourite will get a few outings for Einstein's centenary year; so why not use the form to yoke together other dissimilar trios who bear the same name-endings: the more bizarre the better, of course. Maximum three entries; by 30 March.

Result of No 2554 Set by Tim Hopkins

We asked for hieratic, dirge-like rethinks of light-hearted pieces of literature.

Report

by Ms de Meaner

A popular and varied entry: several fine versions of Belloc's 'Henry King' ('hempen viands' was one of the phrases which tipped it for Vita-Finzi); lots of Lear; and a nice idea from Barry Anthony, rewriting Eliot Minor as Eliot Major, which didn't quite make it. Well done; and a coroner's apiece. Sharpen your pencils, by the way, for the next sponsored comp.

Hail to the ancient one whose hirsute growth  
Was so luxurious that, nothing loth,  
An avian octet found haven there  
And nested trustfully in human hair.  
First came the *syrium aluco* owl,  
Athene's symbol, with his tawny mate.  
Soon followed then, the female farmyard fowl  
That for her eggs we men domesticate.  
Then came four skylarks, they the

great Almighty's  
Harbingers that sing at Heaven's gate;  
And, finally, the little *troglodytes*.  
Upon this marvel we should meditate.

Bird lovers all, let us grow hairier and hairier,  
Let each one vow to be a conservation area.

JOYCE JOHNSON

AND it came to pass that there came into that region a stranger saying, I have strange powers as to the healing of the sick;

2 And the name of the country from which this stranger cometh was known as Deal; and Deal was the name of his birthplace.

3 And behold, this stranger intreated the people and said, Lo, I am from Deal, and my powers are passing strange.

4 And the people asked him and said, What art thy powers? And at this the man of Deal goeth into a deep trance.

5 And he lifted up his eyes and saith, Behold, there is no such thing as pain; and moreover, I believe not that such a feeling existeth.

6 And some of the people marvelled at this saying, Truly, this is a miracle.

7 And others murmured and said unto him, Peradventure thou hast about thy person a pin.

8 And the man of Deal answereth unto them, saying, I have.

9 And he taketh a silver pin in his hand saying, Behold; and he sticketh in the pin.

10 And the man, who was of Deal, crieth out as the pin entereth his leg; and these were the words of his cry: Oblimeh Orileh, which being interpreted means, It hurteth me.

11 And yet the man of Deal telleth the multitude, Although it appeareth that the silver pin hath caused me much anguish, yet it is not so;

12 And then the man of Deal saith again, This sensation cometh from mine imagination, and it is not real, although it disliketh me.

13 And at this the people were sorely troubled.

GILL BREENLEW

No more shall this fair child his regal  
Nor to appease his hunger hempen  
names assume  
viands consume.

Thus envious Nature pious abstinence rewards:  
Unties a life by binding it in deadly cords.  
Renown'd apothecaries urgently were fetch'd  
But soon drew back dismay'd, their

hands outstretch'd  
To grasp the gold that was their

failure's recompense,  
And cried 'No physic can we for these

ills dispense.  
The child *Henricus* ere long will this

life forsake.'  
About the gloomy couch his parent twain

now make  
Loud lamentations, and bemoan Death's

cruel haste,  
But lo! The saintly infant speaks: 'I bid you taste  
No morsel more than the Good Lord for

man intended.

'Tis greed that hath my earthly state so  
rudely ended.'  
C. VITA-FINZI

Upon a time, Wisdom's sepulchral bird  
With ill-assorted feline mate set sail,  
Trusting in wealth well wrapped, as I  
have heard,  
And store of honeyed sweet, to brave the gale.  
Up towards the starry heavens that bird

did gaze,  
And on an elfin instrument did play,  
Discoursing of his love for days and days

With brief but oft repeated roundelay.  
Then did his feline mate make soft reply,  
Saying: "Dear fowl, how sweetly dost thou sing!  
Delightful fowl! Full willingly would I  
Be wed to thee, could'st thou but find a ring."  
Which they, through porcine aid, 'neath bong

tree found,  
And after, danced a moonlit bridal round.

PETER PETERSON



Tony Miles

## Chess

No 124

January Problems

The January problems were a challenging set. The first three all came from the Amsterdam Zonal.

**Problem 114 (3rr2k/p3R1pp/1p3n2/4Q3/3PPp2/3B1P1P/PP2K1Pq/6R1)** was from Miles-Rivas. White has two extra pawns, but the position of the Black queen causes some inconvenience. 1. R-KB1 is possible, but at best murky. Correct is 1.K-B1 (1.K-B2 is less accurate for two reasons (a) 1... Q-N6ch; 2.K-B1, RxR; 3.QxR, RxP; with counterplay, and (b) 1... N-N5ch; 2.RPxN - if BPxN, Q-N6ch - Q-R5ch winning the exchange) RxR; 2.QxR, R-QB1! (If 2... RxP; 3.Q-B8ch, N-N1; 4.B-B2! R-B5; 5.B-N3, R-B8ch; 6.K-K2! R-B7ch; 7.K-Q3 winning) 3.K-B2! Q-N6ch; 4. K-K2! Q-R7 (Draw!?) 5.Q-N7 (The point - this zwischenzug forces the rook to vacate the QB file) R-K1; (Again... R-Q1; 6.K-B1! RxP; 7.Q-B8ch and 8.B-B2! wins) 6.K-B1 completing the triangulation with a straightforward win. The game concluded 6... N-R4; 7.P-K5! P-N3; (... N-N6ch; 8.K-B2, N-R8ch; 9.RxN, QxR; 10.Q-KB7! R-KN1 - else 11.Q-B5 - 11.BxP! mates quickly) 8. P-K6, Q-N6 (or N-N2, B-N5) 9.B-N5, R-KN1; 10.P-K7, N-N2; 11.Q-Q5, P-QR3; 12.B-Q7 Resigns. (13.Q-K5 is overkill.) A rather unusual and neat piece of king triangulation in the middle game.

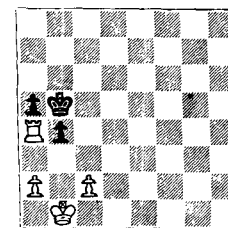
**Problem 115 (5rk1/7p/3p2p1/3q4/1n1P4/4Q1Pb/1R5P/1R4K1)** came from Roos-Miles. Black has the advantage of two pieces for a rook, but White has the irritating shot 1.P-N4! when both minor pieces are en prise. Having established that there was no immediate refutation, my first thought was to try to sacrifice the bishop with something like 1... N-B3; 2.QxB, NxP; but on 3.R-N8 or 3.Q-N2; Black has nothing. So how else can Black bring the knight into action? It struck me that Q6 would be a good square, and eventually I realised that White is not actually threatening to take either piece. If RxN?? Q-N7 mate, or QxB, QxPch and N-Q6. So, first I tidied up the kingside 1... R-B6; 2.Q-K8ch, K-N2; 3.Q-K7ch (not 3.RxN?? R-B8ch and Q-N7 mate) R-B2; 4.Q-K3. But now what? How can Black improve his position? 4... P-R3 perhaps - is White zugzwang!? Not quite, and there are no sensible piece moves, so the only try is 4... P-R4! At this point White, running short of time, cracked up: 5.PxP?, overlooking... Q-B4! when there are no more problems. 6.Q-K2, Q-N4ch; 7.K-R1 and now... B-N5 wins immediately, but being in slight time trouble myself, I decided to first pass move 40, so: 7... Q-Q4ch; 8. K-N1, Q-N4ch; 9.K-R1, Q-Q4ch. Now I expected 10.K-N1, QxPch; 11.K-R1, Q-Q4ch; 12.K-N1, Q-N4ch;

13.K-R1, B-N5 but instead my opponent announced his intention to play 10.K-N1, and claim a draw by threefold repetition! It was soon established that the position had only occurred once before, and under the new rules a false draw claim is punished by a five minute penalty on the clock, which meant that White lost on time.

White can put up stiffer resistance with 5.QxB, but after... QxPch; 6.K-R1, N-Q6 Black is well on top. The most interesting line is 7.PxP, NxR; (7... N-B7ch; 8.RxN, Q-K5ch; 9.R-N2, QxR(N1)ch; 10.R-N1, Q-K5ch; 11.Q-N2, QxQch; 12.KxQ, PxP; 13.R-Q1! R-B3; 14.K-N3, and White can hold on.) 8.Q-N2, when Black's simplest is 8... R-B3; 9.QxN (not 9.RxN, Q-Q8ch; 10.Q-N1, R-B8, and if 9.PxP, R-B7; 10.Q-N7ch, KxP; 11.R-N1ch, K-R3; wins) Q-Q4ch! (QxQ is less clear) 10.K-N1, QxP; (11.R-KB1, Q-K4) and with his king well sheltered Black has excellent winning chances.

**Problem 116 (1q3rk1/pp2Qppp/2b5/8/3B4/1P4P1/P1r1PP1P/R4RK1)** came from Stean-Langeweg. White won nicely by 1.BxNP! KxB; 2. Q-N5ch, K-R1; 3.Q-B6ch, K-N1; 4.Q-B5! and the rook is trapped. 4... RxKP; 5.Q-N4ch, or 4... R-N7; 5.Q-N5ch and Q-B6ch, whilst if 4... B-K5; 5. QxB, leaves White two clear pawns up, so Black resigned.

The first two problems were, apparently, none too easy. In fact I received no completely correct solution to either. First prize in the January competition goes to Mr Garfath (£12), ahead of Messrs Sahasrabudhe, Taylor and Thorat (£8 each) with consolation prizes to Messrs Sobey and Deshmukh.



Problem 124

White, to play, has an extra rook but not for long. Can he win? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 28 March.

Solution to Problem 121

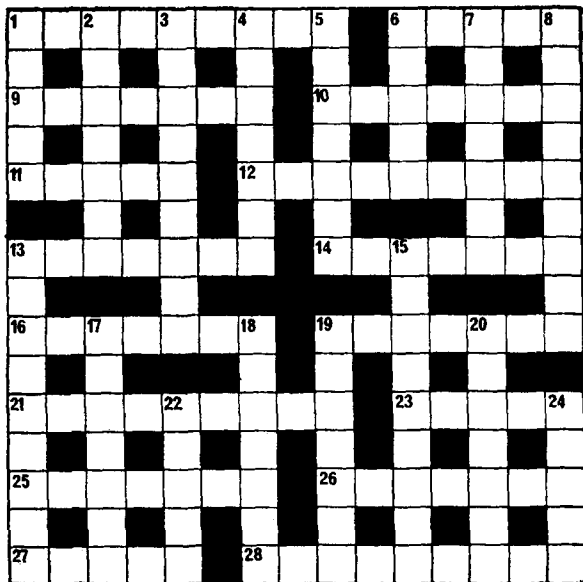
Not exactly: White should win but it is far from easy. Black gains strong counter-play with. 1.P-R6, P-N4! 2.Q-R5, K-R3! (Not P-N5; 3.Q-B7ch, K-N3; 4.Q-Q6ch, K-B2; 5.Q-Q7ch and QxP) 3.P-R6, P-N5! White's best is 4.RPxP (Not BPxP, P-B6 or P-R8=Q, P-N6ch) P-R6; 5.Q-N6ch! QxQ; 6.P-R8=Q, PxP; (or Q-B7, Q-R8ch) 7.Q-R8ch, K-N3; 8.Q-N8ch, K-B3; (or K-R3; 9.P-N5ch, K-R4; 10.Q-R8ch, KxP; 11.QxPch, K-N3; 12.Q-B5ch, K-N2; 13.Q-N4ch wins) 9.P-N5ch! K-K2; 10.Q-N7ch, K-Q1; 11.Q-B6ch! QxQ; 12.PxQ, K-K1; 13.KxP, K-B2; 14.K-R3, KxP; 15.K-R4! winning.

Solution to Problem 122

1.QxRch! KxQ; 2.B-Q5ch, K-R1; 3.R-R8ch mating.

## Weekend Crossword 1296

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1296, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 27 March.



### ACROSS

- 1 Looked like troops suffered when carrying me back (9).
- 6 The vehicle was low in spirits (5).
- 9 Provides protection for coastal town (7).
- 10 Old ones become fools (7).
- 11 Love in females is for things to wear (5).
- 12 Lifeless girl and I marry after one (9).
- 13 At the inn this reception would be something new (7).
- 14 The parson has to journey back about five to two (7).
- 16 Observed as being like a tree (7).
- 19 Hunter would make an animal noise if he lost his female (7).
- 21 Northerner puts spirit into mixture of cider (9).
- 23 Words of love among the celibate (5).
- 25 Time safe for extinction (7).
- 26 Read about a large number being given a setback by the tempter (7).

- 27 Don't advance directly if there is a learner in the team (5).
- 28 Grumbling when a tent collapses at the circus (9).

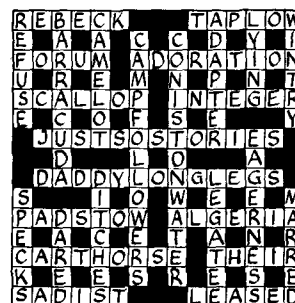
### DOWN

- 1 Pauses and also artlessly resumes (5).
- 2 Revolutionary movement attaching little weight to a philosopher (7).
- 3 Disturbing animal with unpleasant sensation (9).
- 4 'Down the swift Hebrus to the — shore' (Milton) (7).
- 5 Animal's home to note in the country (7).
- 6 I walk upside down, being an antipodean (5).
- 7 Spoil overtime medical preparation (7).
- 8 God second to compete as a nonconformist (9).
- 13 In disrupted tours the team are not favourites (9).
- 15 If broken the glass might make the leg rotten (9).
- 17 Composer who makes emotion come down to earth (7).

- 18 Resentment when gone wrong after failure (7).
- 19 It is a bad sign when a number enter harbour (7).
- 20 Brecht hero holds unusual honour in Asian city (7).
- 22 Rating with or without custom (5).
- 24 Shoot for nail (5).

### SETSQUARE

### Solution to No 1294



### Prizewinners to No 1294

Baldur Simonarson  
(Reykjavik)  
Paul Lee (Leicester)  
Mrs M. O. Davis  
(London SE4)

## APPOINTMENTS

Co-operative Union Ltd

### PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

The Co-operative Union, which is the national advisory and co-ordinating body and spokesman for the Co-operative Movement, seeks a person who will be responsible to the Chief Information Officer in developing the Union's public relations function.

The main duties will be to identify and exploit P.R. opportunities; to prepare press notices and feature articles; to provide material for the Co-operative Union's monthly journal and other publications and to assist in their production through to the printing stage.

The successful applicant will probably be a member of the N.U.J. with at least 10 years' experience who already has personal contacts with business/industrial correspondents of the national media.

Commencing Salary: c £5,520.

Please write for an application form to:

THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,  
CO-OPERATIVE UNION LTD.,  
HOLYOAKE HOUSE, HANOVER STREET,  
MANCHESTER M60 0AS.

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9-13 Cursitor Street,  
LONDON EC4A 1LJ.

Interviews in London, March 28 & April 2.



### THE RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP for Mental Welfare and Rehabilitation



### KEY SECRETARY

To fill a post offering variety, scope and opportunity for initiative. Essential requirements are energy and a systematic approach, shorthand and audio typing experience. If you want a place in a lively team concerned with running therapeutic communities, and with free lunches, ring 603 6373 and ask for Stewart Casimir or write to the Richmond Fellowship, 8 Addison Road, London W14 8DL.

### ELECTRICAL POWER ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION AREA SECRETARY APPOINTMENT

A vacancy will shortly occur for an Area Secretary, and applications are invited.

The duties are, within the ambit of national agreements, to negotiate terms and conditions of employment with Electricity Boards for members of the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, and generally to represent and look after the interests of the Association's membership. The work is varied and challenging, involves travel, and carries considerable responsibility. Week-end and other out-of-hours work is involved. The ability to address meetings, conduct committees, prepare and present claims, and to act generally in a representative capacity, is essential.

Initially the salary scale of £6,055.35 to £8,436.28 (including self financing productivity bonus) will be paid, with the opportunity of progressing to the higher grade of £7,508.68 to £9,363.88 in due course, plus £160 general availability allowance. These salaries are all due to be reviewed in the near future. A car allowance is also paid. Initially the appointment will be located in the North West.

The EPEA is a constituent part of the Engineers' and Managers' Association, and represents the engineering, scientific and managerial staffs in the Electricity Supply Industry in the United Kingdom.

Further details from, or written applications, to:

The General Secretary, Electrical Power Engineers' Association, Station House, Fox Lane North, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9HW.

Applications should be sent to the General Secretary by 19 March 1979.

## GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

### Lecturer-Liberal Studies and History

Glasgow School of Art is a Central Institution financed by the Scottish Education department. It offers BA (Hons) and BA degrees in Fine Art and Design (CNA).

The successful applicant will be primarily concerned with the teaching of the History of Fine Art and the development of study of the relationship of Architecture at all stages of the degree courses. Qualification in fine art with a strong element of architectural interest is desirable.

Salary will be, with suitable placing, on the Lecturer A scale £4,056-£7,698 per annum (under review). The appointment will be effective from 1 September 1979.

Further details and application forms from: **Secretary and Treasurer, Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G3 6RQ** to whom completed forms should be returned by 27 April 1979.

(Readvertisement)

### NORTH-WEST ARTS

The Regional Arts Association require a

### VISUAL ARTS OFFICER

to take charge of all aspects of visual arts including photography. Salary AP5/SO1 (£4,773-£5,568). Further details and application form from **North-West Arts, 62 King Street, Manchester M2 4LY**. Tel. (061) 833 9471. Closing date for completed application forms: 23 March. Previous applicants need not re-apply.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION

### REQUIRE LECTURER

IDECA, a corporate body to the Ministry of Construction of Japan, is managing a one year term of training activities, serving overseas aid on construction engineering, at Central Training Centre, Construction College, Ministry of Construction.

Applicants (Male aged 25-30) must be specialised in the field of civil engineering or construction engineering of post-graduate level.

We offer £300 per month, full accommodation and return ticket. Contract is for one year (possible to renew). The college is close to Mt Fuji and you can train in Judo and Karate. Term begins in May.

Applications, including personal history, photo and the names and addresses of two referees, should be sent to:

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION**  
7F Yamauchi Bldg, 3-24-8 Nishi-shinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan.  
Tel: 03-438-1758/1759

## McGill University

### DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

#### NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

Applications are invited for an appointment in Medieval History at the

#### Assistant Professor

rank, commencing 1 September 1979. A completed PhD, publications, and teaching experience are required. Salary is commensurate with qualifications. The current minima is \$20,750.

Interested candidates should forward a letter of application, two letters of reference, official transcripts and a detailed curriculum vitae to: **Professor C. I. Miller, Chairman, Department of History, McGill University, 855 Sherbrooke St West, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2T7.**

Position is open until filled.

The Queen's University  
of Belfast

### Temporary Lectureship in Sociology

#### Department of Social Studies

This temporary post, arising from leave of absence of a member of staff, will be available for one year from 1 September 1979. Applications are sought from candidates able to assist in the teaching of **SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS**. Salary £3,885 per annum with superannuation under USS.

Curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of three referees should be sent to: **the Personnel Officer, The Queen's University of Belfast, BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland**, from whom further particulars may be obtained. Closing date: 31 March 1979. (Please quote Ref. 79/NS)



## THE COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

has a vacancy in Manchester for a

## HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(Employment Promotion)

The Employment Promotion Section is responsible for advising employers, trade unions and related organisations on the promotion of equality and the elimination of racial discrimination in employment, and the staff is mainly based in London. The current vacancy is for an officer who will be based in the CRE's Manchester office and will carry out some of the Section's work in the North and Scotland.

The officer will be required to take up and develop a programme of advisory work and discussions with employers and trade unions in the regions covered, and will need the ability to develop a wide range of contacts and working relationships, including those with local community relations councils, trade union officials, senior management, local authorities and Government Departments.

#### Qualifications:

The post is open to men or women who have experience and knowledge of the problems of minority groups in the field of employment promotion. A degree, or similar qualification, would be desirable, as would some knowledge and experience of race relations.

#### Salary:

The starting salary will be £4,842 per annum, rising by five annual increments to a maximum of £5,717 per annum.

Please write for application form and further details, quoting reference HEO Manch. and enclosing a large self-addressed envelope, to the Personnel Department, Commission for Racial Equality, 10/12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH. Please note that completed application forms must be received by the CRE not later than 2 April 1979.

### WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION WEST OF SCOTLAND DISTRICT

### Tutor-Organiser

Applications are invited from persons with relevant qualifications and experience for the above post. The tutor-organiser will have special responsibilities for the maintenance and development of the District's work in adult literacy and basic education.

Salary on the WEA tutor-organisers' scale, £3,330-£6,558 per annum.

Further details and application forms can be obtained from: **The District Secretary, WEA, 212 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4HW**. (Tel: 041-332 0176/7). Closing date for applications **Friday, 6 April 1979**.

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Applications to the Headmistress, enclosing copies of recent testimonials, and the names of two referees.

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with elderly people responsible for a team of three field workers and for the recruitment and support of voluntary workers. CQWS desirable, experience essential. Salary range £4,680-£5,508. Application form from Age Concern Westminster, 313 Harrow Road, W9. Tel. 828 8070 extension 3023.

**AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY**

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ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

**SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW/  
RESEARCH FELLOW  
(Resources Policy)**

The Centre is carrying out a continuing programme of studies in the resources policy field, dealing with the major policy issues likely to arise in the development of Australia's natural resources. Most attention will continue to be given to the broader economic, social and political issues of the energy and other resources developments, including resource trade, but it is hoped also in the future to give increased attention to specific environmental implications of resource issues.

Applicants should have a PhD, or equivalent, in economics and should be able to demonstrate their experience in/or aptitude for applying the discipline to applied policy research and to be willing to participate in such research as part of a project team.

**CLOSING DATE: 20 APRIL 1979.**

**SALARIES** will be in accordance with qualifications and experience within the range: Research Fellow \$A15,786-\$A20,606 p.a.; Senior Research Fellow \$A22,049-\$A26,301 p.a. Current exchange rates: \$A1 : 56p : \$US1.13.

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**OTHER CONDITIONS:** Reasonable appointment expenses are paid. Superannuation benefits are available for applicants who are eligible to contribute. Assistance with housing is provided for an appointee from outside Canberra.

The University reserves the right not to make an appointment or to make an appointment by invitation at any time.

Prospective applicants should obtain the further particulars from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appt), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF.

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM**

**LECTURER IN PSYCHOLOGY  
(BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES)**

Applications are invited for this vacancy within the Department of Psychiatry. The post is one of three which together form the Behavioural Sciences Section of the Department of Psychiatry, based in the new Medical School next to the University campus. Duties will include contributions towards teaching, as part of the integrated B. Med. Sci. degree course, together with helping in the further development of a Behavioural Sciences module and project supervision for Honours Year students. Experience in the teaching of medical students and a clinical qualification will be an advantage, but are not essential. The successful candidate will be expected to pursue a research interest. Salary will be on the non-clinical Lecturer scale with membership of USS/FSSU as appropriate.

Further information and applications forms may be obtained from the Deputy Registrar, Medical School, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham NG7 2UH, to whom they should be returned completed by 5 April 1979.

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Write in confidence with full particulars to Sir Basil Engholm, KCB, Chairman, British Film Institute, 127 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0EA. Letters should reach him as soon as possible, and not later than 26 March.

**UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD  
DIVISION OF EDUCATION**

Applications are invited from men and women for a post of

**LECTURER**

In the above Division, tenable from 1 September 1979. The person appointed will be expected to contribute to the professional and in-service training of teachers with special responsibility for the Sociology of Education in the M.Ed. and B.Ed. degree programmes. He or she should also be prepared to supervise Research students. Initial salary in range £3,883-£6,080 a year on scale rising to £7,754 a year. Particulars from the Registrar and Secretary, the University, Sheffield S10 2TN to whom applications (5 copies) should be sent by 17 April 1979. Quote Ref R267/D

**BIRKBECK COLLEGE  
(University of London)**

Applications are invited for the post of

**LECTURER IN ENGLISH**

to teach literature from 1600 to the present day. Preference will be given to applicants whose research interests are in the field of 20th century literature. Initial salary up to £4,655 on scale £3,910-£7,754 p.a. (under review) plus £450 p.a. London allowance. Further details and application forms should be obtained from the Secretary (NS), Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX. Closing date: 20 April.

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Candidates should be available for four or five weeks commencing 15 to 29 June, speak at least one foreign language well, preferably Italian or French. Experience with American students or accompanying students in travel abroad will be an advantage.

Further information and application forms can be obtained by writing to:

Paul Williams,  
**AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
FOR FOREIGN STUDY,**  
37 Queens Gate,  
London SW7 5HR.  
Telephone 01-581 2733.

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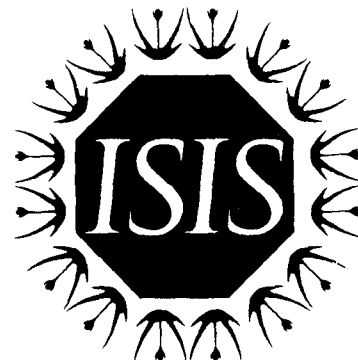
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# NEW STATESMAN

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16 March 1979

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### Delays in Distribution

We wish to apologise to readers who were unable to obtain copies of last week's New Statesman at the normal time. The delays were caused by an industrial dispute at our printers, which is unresolved at the time of going to press.

## Theatres

**ALDWYCH THEATRE** (Royal Shakespeare Company), 835-8404. Final perf. 'Coriolanus' prior to European tour. Postal bkg now for 'Love's Labour's Lost', 'The Taming of the Shrew', and Bulgakov's 'The White Guard' — Season opens 9 April.

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**TOWER**, Canonbury Place, N1. Sandy Wilson's musical 'Divorce Me, Darling!'. 23-25 March, 27 March-1 April at 7.30 (mats 31 March, 7 April at 3.0). Booking: 226 5111 (Mons 6.30-8, Tues-Sats 2.15-8).

## Entertainments

**JAZZ BAND BALL**, Fri. 30 March. Humphrey Lyttelton. Tickets £2.50 Camden Festival Box Office 01-387 6293.

**JAZZ FOR A SPRING DAY**, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Sunday 25 March at 3 p.m. with Ike Isaacs, Denny Wright, Len Skeat, Digby Fairweather, Brian Brocklehurst, Vic Ash, Dave Shepherd, Brian Lemon and Stan Bourke. Tickets £2.75p-£1.25p.

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**CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY** — Brian Sedgmore MP on 'Reflections on the Government of Britain'. Wed. 21 March. 7.30 p.m. 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1. All welcome.

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23-25 March 1979

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Speakers from Italy, Germany, Scandinavia and Hungary on Community Museums, Factory Histories, worker autobiographies in Poland, class consciousness in the Fiat workers of Turin, Breton Peasants, the Swedish family, Frenchwomen and migration, Nazi genocide, Women in the Resistance, and Italian popular song.

All welcome. Conference fee £2.00. Brenda Corti, Sociology Department, Essex University, Colchester. Tel: 0206 862286.

**'HOUSING AND POLITICS'** — Tenants Rights' — The Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers invites you to a conference on Saturday 24 March 1979, 10.15 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. at the Gustave Tuck Theatre, University College, Gower Street, WC1. The conference will be chaired by Arthur Latham, MP, and the speakers are Stuart Weir, Stephen Sedley and Nick Rainsford. The fee is £1.50 which includes background papers, morning coffee etc and applications should be made to the Secretary, Haldane Society, 14 Parkfield Road, NW10.

**HUMAN RIGHTS** — the link with foreign policy, trade and aid. Fabian Seminars 24 March, 10.30 to 4.30, 24 Tufton Street. Judith Hart MP, Philip Whitehead MP. £2 at door or in advance from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, London SW1. 01-930 3077.

**LEEDS LONDON MARCH** Against Fascism in Turkey. Last leg Sun. 18 March in London. Meet 9 a.m. Broomfield Park, Palmer's Green, N13. March through London. Bring banners. Contact Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey, 29 Parkfield St. N1. Tel. 226 3401.

**PRIORITIES FOR HEALTH**: Sat/Sun. 24/25 March 10.30-4.45 each day. NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields, Holborn. Coffee available. Bring sandwiches. Tckts £3.50 or £2 per day (Students/pensioners £1 per day) from Socialist Medical Assn. 9 Poland St. W1V 3DG (01-439 3395) or at door.

**PUBLIC MEETING** concluding London Leeds March Against Fascism in Turkey. Speakers Sid Bidwell MP, NUJ Denis MacShane and a representative from the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey. Sun. 18 March 4 p.m. ULU, Malet St. WC1.

**FOCUS GROUP** Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Ave, London WC2. Thurs. 22 March 6.30 p.m. Focus on Europe. Dr Carol Cosgrove Twitchett — University of Surrey. 'Europe and the Developing World'. Adm. 30p for non RCS members.

**THEOSOPHY**: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Commemorative Meeting Sun. 18 March 8 p.m. 'W.Q. Judge'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gdns, London W2.

## Isabel Letelier

Speaking on Chile at the premiere of

## 'The Dead are not Silent'

a new feature film on the assassination in Washington of Orlando Letelier, with 'Patchworks of Santiago'. Tues 27 March 6.45, Sudbury House Cinema, Newgate St, St Pauls, EC1. Tickets £1.50 from Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7. 01-272 4298.

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Courses cont. on page 379

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